dissent

$3.00/Summer 1981

Debate in Poland:

SHOULD WE CALL A GENERAL STRIKE?

Transcript of a Historic Meeting Of "Solidarity," The Free Polish Unions

Translated & Annotated by Abraham Brumberg

Carole Joffe
The Abortion Struggle in American Politics

John Stephens
Impasse & Breakthrough in Sweden

H. Brand
On the Economic Conditions of American Workers

Irving Howe
Looking into El Salvador

Boris Souvarine
Last Conversations With Isaac Babel

Martin Kilson
Politics & Identity Among Black Intellectuals

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DISSENT (ISSN 0012–3846), issued July 1, 1981, is published quarterly, spring, summer, fall, and winter, by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $12.00 for one year; $20.00 for two years; $9.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $2.00 for mailing costs per year (institutional rate $17.00 per year, $30.00 for two years, single copy $3.00). All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $3.00. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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Stanley Plastrik
(1915-1981)

The other day I was asked to speak at a gathering on "the moral basis of socialism." I was somewhat taken aback since it was not clear to me whether socialism can claim a moral basis apart from that of other humane persuasions, and if it can, in which ways and to what extent. But then, after visiting the hospital in which Stanley lay dying, it struck me that the moral basis of socialism had been on the phone with me almost every day these past seventeen years, had been my friend for forty, and my collaborator on *Dissent* for 27 years. In the experience we shared since the late 1930s the *idea* of socialism may have become increasingly problematical, but the rightness of *being* a socialist had remained clear. And to be one meant to be like Stanley; meant to stand fast in good times or bad; meant to be on call for whatever task was needed; meant to live by a code, largely unspoken yet not to be violated, of concern for the lives of men and women. Those of us near Stanley never had to talk about the moral basis of *anything*, since we felt through him its constant warming presence.

In the late '30s, when I first met Stanley, all of us were opinionated, lively, cocksure, dogmatic. Stanley was a shade more cantankerous than the rest of us, but also more independent. He quarreled with Trotsky about India, claiming rightly enough that he knew more about that country than the "old man" did. He had entered the Trotskyist movement during the '30s, when that wasn't exactly a passport to popularity; within it, though a loyal activist, he kept showing inclinations toward heresy. Before the rest of us, he sensed the disintegration of orthodox Marxism as both world view and politics, though it was not until some years later, in the early '50s, after we had begun our stumbling journey toward an undogmatic democratic socialism, that he put these thoughts down on paper. For doing this he met with the disapproval of a comrade who would later develop still greater heresies but who then chastized Stanley for his pessimism. Stanley, he charged, was indulging in a "mood indigo." For years we kept teasing Stanley about his "mood indigo," but when I recently looked up his piece I found an all-too-accurate, though gloomy enough, anticipation of thoughts and events to come.

We knew—we children of the '30s—that we were living in a desperate time, that with Hitler and Stalin the darkness of apocalypse had fallen upon us. We were latecomers. We had never been able to experience the early enchantments or delusions of the Marxist vision; we adhered to it only through violent negations of its traducers; we knew it only in its collapse, in the shame that Stalinism brought, even upon its opponents. We began, in the early '40s, a journey it would take us years to understand: a journey from orthodoxy to the problematic, from Marxist ideology to a quizzical attachment to socialist values, from the claustrophobic security of the sect to the bracing anxieties of independence.

There were traits, stigmata we all shared. We became the most unyielding and passionate defenders within the left of the absolute necessity of democracy; and Stanley, who had a life-long interest in and deep knowledge of India, kept arguing that only a democratic foundation could provide the basis in the emerging countries for a healthy social modernity. Nothing could shake him from the persuasion that if something of value did remain in the socialist heritage, it found its heart-throb in the exercise of democracy. He fought equally against the rightist realpolitiker and the authoritarian leftists who claimed that democracy was good only for "us," not for "them."

What had emerged from our earlier radicalism—"one dripping trophy" as Melville says: yes, dripping with blood—was the principled articulation of *our* anti-Stalinism, through which, if we could not regain the strength of socialism, we might at least salvage its honor. On such questions Stanley and I would almost always agree, for we

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had been trained in the best of schools: the school of failure.

We had other traits, other stigmata. Stanley had no patience at all with the puffy agitation, the righteous posturing, and what he came to call the verbal radicalism that had been, and sometimes continued to be, an affliction of the movement. We were sick of soapboxers, especially if they came to our living rooms. At meetings where this happened, Stanley had a way of dozing off, or seeming to, and I would watch his act with amusement, knowing it was his way of signaling his friends the distaste he felt for easy rhetoric. There was another common trait: we had *had* it with meetings—in fact, this was almost a way of defining a generation. When we held *Dissent* meetings Stanley would gesture to me after a while that it was time to adjourn, though precisely how to bring this about wasn't clear.

Whatever the disadvantages of having been trained in the school of failure—and these were of course numerous and grave—there was one advantage: we tried to be honest with ourselves, we tried to avoid cant, we submitted to a grinding self-criticism. I don't say we always succeeded, only that we tried. If *Dissent* didn't always scintillate with the emotions of a movement on the rise, we had at least the moral strength of people who wanted to find ideas by which to preserve the values that had impelled them to the generous mistakes—and valid commitments, too—of their youth.

I don't wish to claim too much for this experience. We didn't reknit an ideology or rebuild a movement. But we did what serious people should always be doing: we turned answers into questions. This has not changed the world, which proved to be more recalcitrant than any of us had supposed. But it helped change us. And perhaps it also helped shape the thought and experience of a few to come after us.

IN ALL THESE YEARS Stanley was our rock, our center, our pivot. He knew the common emotions of discouragement, but he kept on. If ever a man did steady work, it was he. Dragging bundles to the post office, dealing with printers, translators, and bank managers, scouring the European press for material, making friends with younger people the rest of us didn't try or know how to reach: that was Stanley. He kept things together, he kept caring for, he held us with his strength, he kept caring for. He made peace between volatile collaborators who, out of common frustration, sometimes sprang at each other's throats. He took our little project seriously, so much so that he loved to make jokes at its expense, especially at the expense of its miniature condition. He never wavered, so secure was he morally. I sometimes wavered, proposing any number of times over the past years to end our venture—enough already!—but Stanley sustained and helped one, with the wry humor of a disenchanted optimist.

We had a very close friendship. He and I did a lot of the daily work of the magazine together, in almost complete harmony, developing the sort of mutual confidence that requires no talk. We did talk a lot, as it happens, since we sensed that the greatest pleasure in conversation occurs among friends who no longer need conversation. Sometimes I'd play a little game for my private amusement. I'd ask Stanley to do something, say, on Monday; I'd wait seven or eight days and ask again whether he had done it. Often he would really not remember any more, since he had of course completed the task the previous Tuesday. "Oh that," he'd grunt when I explained, "that's been done long ago."

This mutual confidence extended to every area of our work and life, even to those parts of private existence we were too inhibited or shy to talk about. Though I should add that in the last two or so years we did talk more openly. We formed the habit of lunching together about once a month at a dive near his house, and I teased Stanley into having *Dissent* pay for this lunch. He agreed, but only on the condition that most of our talk really be about business and that we not exceed together $8 for the bill. (It was too late for us to be lured into the corruptions of bureaucracy. . . .) We would talk at these lunches about when to end the magazine—when it was no longer fun, Stanley used to say. We would talk about the hope that each of us would see that the other, if stricken first, did not suffer the indignity of surviving in a vegetative state.

Stanley, as I've said, kept getting better with age. He mellowed. He made friends with young people, showing a fine talent for patiently explain-

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ing our views, our traditions to those who came near us—a talent, I might add, not all of us quite had. He was our Minister of Education. He was our Interior Minister. He was our Foreign Minister. Maybe also our Minister of Tourism, always welcoming friends from abroad, the *Esprit* group from Paris, political allies from India, freelance radicals from Israel and Italy. Stanley was the man who took care.

It's a matter of acute chagrin to us that Stanley died when he did. A year ago he retired from his teaching post and worked almost full time on the magazine, establishing a whole new network of relationships. He had also begun to plan out a book on India and gone there to check impressions, recover memories. I have never known him to be happier, more genial. He enjoyed himself immensely this past year and there was every reason to hope for more such years to come.

The years pass, our lives approach their ends, and in moments of introspection we ask ourselves: what has it all been, the tumult and the noise, the talk and the accumulated paper? Much of it makes one uneasy, seems questionable: the greying files of magazines, the meetings and debates. But the sharing of our days, the comradeship of friends who have tried to live for—more important, to live *through*—an idea: that is the value, at once precious and fragile, we can give each other.

IRVING HOWE □

I knew Stanley Plastrik for more than twenty years, but I saw him almost only at *Dissent* meetings. I knew him, then, as a political man, which is certainly what he was—to his fingertips—but not all he was.

To me, he was one of those people who had come into the socialist movement during a time of great trouble in this country, but also a time of great hope for political advance, radical transformation, and who had remained committed when that hope faded. Committed not to this or that doctrine, but to those deep values without which no doctrine is worth anything. Knowing him, listening to him talk about the old days and the new, gave me a sense of socialism's past. I don't mean its history, that I could read about in the library, but its immediate past, the personal and political experience out of which *Dissent* emerged, which wasn't my own experience, but into which I was, with his help, naturalized.

He was a man of wonderful steadiness and political judgment, who seemed unscarred by the defeats and frustrations of the left. Not untouched, no one has been untouched, but unscarred: without rancor or resentment. Despite the past, he was open to the present, hopeful about the future, kind to the young, receptive to new ideas in ways I already have difficulty imitating. And I was one of the young ones, one of the first of the second generation of *Dissent* writers and editors. He was gentle with me even when I needed a kick in the pants, and gentle too with others who have the same need. He worked well with younger radicals; he knew when to talk and when to listen, and he was able, more easily than most of us, to establish authentic relations—perhaps for the same reason that he was such a good traveller: though he disliked political adventurism, he was personally adventurous. He was always ready to go out of his way.

I saw him once in Israel, he and Simone in Jerusalem. And I remember both his delight in the beauties of the place and his quick perceptions of its politics. I don't know the history of his views on the Jewish question, but he had come, I thought, to the right view: a joy in the existence of Israel, and a critical perspective on each of its governments.

But I will remember him best in the chair he always chose at our board meetings, making his financial report, intervening patiently, sometimes just a bit impatiently, in our political discussions. A calm presence, helping to hold us together; a model, for me, always now, of political intelligence and moral integrity.

MICHAEL WALZER □

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An Annual Prize

The Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas (FSISI) announces an annual contest open to young writers (30 or under) for a reflective essay of between 4,000 and 8,000 words on any topic that reflects an independent study of social or political problems. An award of $500 will be made to the winner, and publication of the essay will be arranged in *Dissent*.

The closing date for entries in this first Annual FSISI Essay Contest was May 1, 1981, and will be, for the subsequent annual contests, every May 1 thereafter. The judges, whose decision is final, will be Irving Howe, Michael Walzer and Lewis Coser. The winner of this year's contest will be announced in the Fall Issue of *Dissent*.

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Joseph Clark

What Kind of a Country Will This Be?

The oddest things cause consternation in the Reagan White House. For example, on April 30 the president was carried away by his subject matter and departed from prepared text. It was a public ceremony (for the victims of the Holocaust) so the three men who run the U.S. government—Edwin Meese III, James A. Baker III, and Michael K. Deaver—couldn't be of much help. Reagan said:

> . . . even at the negotiating table, never shall it be forgotten for a moment that wherever it is taking place in the world, the persecution of people, for whatever reason—persecution of people for their religious belief—that is a matter to be on the negotiating table or the United States does not belong at that table.

What's so disturbing about a sentiment that can be traced all the way back to the Declaration of Independence? It wasn't the party line, that's the trouble. The Administration had gone to great lengths to distinguish itself from the Carter emphasis on human rights. Terrorism was the guiding principle, not violations of human rights. Nor were interests of state to be set aside if South Africa enshrined apartheid and tyrannical rule over Namibia; or if Argentina caused 15,000 people to "disappear"; or if El Salvador military personnel caused 7,000 to "disappear" and served up the bodies of four American churchwomen and two AFL-CIO land-reform workers.

White House Deputy Press Secretary Larry Speakes was immediately besieged by reporters after Reagan's brief remarks to find out how and why the party line had been changed. A *New York Times* dispatch the next day described how Reagan's remark "triggered alarm in the West Wing" and "a meeting was immediately convened about 'what was said, what was meant and how it could be read.'"

The *Times* went on to report that the White House spokesman "said Mr. Reagan had not meant to alter his policy of playing down the rights issue in foreign relations." A New York *Daily News* dispatch the same day added Speakes's comments that, "I would not read this as a declaration of new policy. . . . I would not apply this to any specific negotiations that are in progress or that may come up in the future." The *News* cited a specific example given by Speakes, pointing out where the Reagan statement would *not* apply, "such as arms talks with the Soviet Union, where treatment of Jews is an issue."

As though to prove that the new Administration could surpass previous ones in presenting an image of America of divided counsel and conflicting policies, we had the matter of the grain embargo against the Soviet Union ordered by former President Carter. Secretary of State Haig kept assuring the world that as long as Soviet troops were in Afghanistan and menacing Poland, the embargo would not be lifted. So, presto, it was lifted. Whether to save his own face or to indicate that appeasement was not the sum total of American policy, General Haig issued new assurances, this time that in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland the U.S. would impose a total embargo on Russia. The *denouement* of this new assurance by General Haig provided inspiration to the *New York Times* reporter who fashions the weekly Saturday News Quiz. On May 2 the quiz asked:

> A government took exception to Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr.'s statement that the Reagan administration would impose a total trade embargo against the Soviet Union if it invaded Poland. What government was it and what was its response?

The answer, of course, was the government of the United States, which repudiated General

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Haig's declaration. The government of the United States seemed to be saying that with Soviet troops in Afghanistan and clear indications they would remain there, with Soviet troops in Poland as well as on its borders and with a contemptuous refusal to give any assurances of Polish independence, there were other considerations that weighed far more in the balance. Considerations such as Senator Jesse Helms and other members of the Senate Agriculture Committee; such as the Continental Grain Corporation; such as all those farm-belt voters who were not going to be inconvenienced by the Reagan administration in the face of Soviet invasions anywhere. After all, hadn't the president shown how tough he was by calling the Soviets liars and cheats and charging they did not even believe in God?

A CLEAR INDICATION that the tears that came to President Reagan's eyes when he affirmed his support of human rights at the Holocaust commemoration would not blur his vision when it came to aid for military dictatorships was the Administration's decision to resume military aid to Guatemala. Murderous repression of dissident, even moderate groups in Guatemala increased while the regime was celebrating the Reagan victory. As the State Department expressed pious hopes that the violence would abate, 76 Christian Democrats have been murdered or have "disappeared" in the first few months of the Reagan administration. In current elections all parties aligned with the church or of any independence have been terrorized against participation. Six right-wing parties are running. The front-runner, an extreme rightist, Mario Sandoval Alarcón, has boasted of his 3,000-member private army.

A report to the *New York Times* from Guatemala (April 28) says the number of killings under the dictatorship of Major General Romeo Lucas Garcia has reached 5,000. This dispatch noted that one coroner in a local morgue said that "*two of every three bodies brought to his morgue bore signs of torture.*" Some problems face the Reagan administration in getting its military aid program for Guatemala under way. There's a matter of embarrassing legislation that previous Democratic congresses have left on the books under the Carter administration. These are laws that forbid military aid to governments practicing gross violations of human rights. But efforts are being made by the Administration to get around such laws, especially since now an old and much lamented coalition has been born again in the House of Representatives—Republicans and Dixiecrats, the latter calling themselves "Democrats." So, even though the record shows that brutal repression in Guatemala has had a net result of producing a Communist-inspired guerrilla resistance movement, the Administration is determined to have still another "loyal ally" against Soviet communism—Guatemala.

The recruitment of allies to fight Soviet communism creates something of a problem with respect to the declared tenet that is the heart and soul of Reagan foreign policy—combating terrorism. In the Middle East the major terrorist organization is the Palestine Liberation Organization. And the lion's share of PLO finances, used to purchase Soviet weapons, comes from Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, the Administration proceeded with the sale of F-15s to the clerical dictatorship of Saudi Arabia. When that didn't satisfy them, the Administration added special equipment to the planes that would double their range. Now they could make it to Tel Aviv and back. Finally, as though this were not enough of a Passover gift to the Saudis, the Administration moved to send AWACS to these Middle East champions of the struggle against communism. AWACS—Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft—wouldn't quite be able to follow military developments in the Soviet Union but they are perfect for monitoring the take-off of a plane anywhere in Israel.

At this point even those American Jewish leaders who thought Reagan's ties to the oil interests would not interfere with his friendship for Israel are starting to have second thoughts. General Haig, called to the rescue, explained that the high-technology military equipment being sent to Saudi Arabia was part of the worldwide fight against Soviet communism. The secretary of state reckoned without the wily and self-confident oil minister of Saudi Arabia, Sheik Ahmed Zaki Yamani, whose well-trimmed beard is a familiar feature on American TV screens. At a Foreign Policy Association forum in New York Sheik Yamani said the Saudis consider Israel, *not* the Soviet Union, the main and immediate enemy. To an audience that included "oil executives, analysts and others with connections with the petroleum industry" (*New York Timies*, April 24), the Sheik spiced his speech with anti-Israeli jokes. He also explained America's friendship for Israel—educated Saudis, the Sheik said, are "aware of the extent of the powers of the Zionist lobby and the Jewish community." His remarks were greeted with applause and his anti-Israeli jokes caused "general laughter" among the oil-wise listeners.

Placing terrorism in the center of American

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foreign policy has thus occasioned a fascinating exercise in logic. Ordinarily, accumulated data form the basis for generalizations concerning problems we face abroad or at home. Early in the pronouncements of the new Administration both the president and the secretary of state declared that terrorism—and certainly not human rights—was the issue for America. Then General Haig ordered his department and all other departments of government to provide the evidence that this was so. Surely the Federal Bureau of Investigation would have the hard evidence. Alas for the central issue, FBI director William H. Webster broke the news to a nationwide TV audience: " . . . there is no real evidence of Soviet-sponsored terrorism within the United States. . . . We seem at this point to be free of direct, deliberate Soviet domination or control or instigation of terrorist activity."

The hope, then, was that intelligence agencies operating worldwide would come up with Soviet support for Haig and Reagan. After all, it was openly proclaimed and public knowledge that the Soviets supported Libya, Syria, and the PLO, all sponsors of terrorism. But U.S. government sleuths "are still scrambling to catch up with Mr. Haig's comments, intelligence officials said" (*New York Times*, May 3). Perhaps the most devastating comment about the effort to make "terrorism" *the* issue for American foreign policy came from Wal-

Gus Tyler

Snake Oil Remedy

It's "snake oil," says the *Economist*, in writing about President Reagan's proposed "investment incentives." Coming from anyone else, that sort of snotty talk could just be brushed off. But the *Economist* is not just another publication: it is the highly prestigious British publication, of fundamentally conservative bent, read by policy-makers around the world for its insights into global economic trends.

Hence, before this government rushes into this $165 billion giveaway to corporations that "provides work for bureaucrats, money for tax lawyers, and precious few benefits for anyone else" except puffed-up profiteers, it might be well for our President, and Congress—both Democrats and Republicans—to take a look at the March 21 issue of the *Economist*.

- Despite the fact that just about everybody in Washington—liberal as well as conservative—is ready to embrace "incentives" as if they were motherhood or Dolly Parton, the *Economist* warns that "America may be about to follow Britain in finding out the hard way that accelerated depreciation has been oversold; that what gains it does bring are expensive; and that there are cheaper and more effective ways of increasing investment."
- The big argument for swift write-offs is that this is a way to ease taxes for our overtaxed American corporations. But, says the *Economist*, "American companies are not overtaxed by international standards. A recent study by accountant Price Waterhouse found that an investing company pays more tax in West Germany and Japan than in America. In West Germany the rule for most investments is straight-line depreciation over the asset's whole life, and in Japan the rules are almost as strict. Yet both countries devote a far larger share of gross domestic product to investment than America does." Britain "has the most generous depreciation rules" and little to show for it.

The cost to Uncle Sam over the next five years would be $165 billion. This multibillion expenditure would be "an undisguised government handout for business and an inefficient carrot for boosting investment. Even at its present level, it often simply rewards investment that would have taken place anyway."

You don't get business to invest just by giving it a rebate on investments, says the *Economist*. "Investment booms arise mainly from an encouraging economic climate, not from accelerated depreciation schemes."

- To encourage that "climate" the *Economist* recommends applying the giveaway money to "reducing the federal deficit" or to "lower interest rates."

But how can we expect such actions when the Federal Reserve Board is determined to check growth with its high interest rates and the Reagan administration is about to increase—yes, increase—the federal debt, despite its savings at the expense of the poor, by giving away to corporations a sum equal to about a quarter of the federal budget? □

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ter Laqueur, an accepted authority on the subject. He said: "Combating terrorism is a police problem, it is not a problem for the foreign minister of a global power."

SO THE "TRIUMPHS" of Reagan's policies have thus far been limited to domestic affairs. The reawakened Dixiecrat-Republican alliance in the House voted for a budget that takes from the poor and gives to the rich. It was a triumph for an imperial presidency and a surrender of legislative prerogatives. While cuts in social expenditures and for the general welfare were being facilitated by a hue and cry about state and local preeminence, federal power was being asserted to deprive localities of resources, starving urban areas, and centralizing decisions that added up to demolition of aid to children, to education, to mass transportation, to the unemployed, to the homeless, the sick, and the handicapped. A recent hearing before a House subcommittee describes the process.

On April 1 the Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation of the House Ways and Means Committee invited labor representatives to a roundtable discussion. Presiding was a Democratic chairman, Fortney H. Stark. He opened the discussion with the flat statement that opposing budget cuts as such was out of order. We have been instructed, he said, to cut $4.1 billion from our jurisdiction—welfare and unemployment compensation. Representatives of the AFL-CIO, of the United Auto Workers, the State, County and Municipal Workers, and of the ILGWU stared in disbelief. John Gates, who was representing the garment workers' union, interjected a question for the chairman: "Have we been invited here only to choose between taking milk from children on welfare or children of workers on unemployment compensation?" As Gates describes it, the chairman gave a long and uncomfortable answer. "If I understand your reply," Gates then said to him, "the answer is 'Yes'?" The chairman nodded.

All the labor spokesmen pointed out that the committee was saying in effect that the people and their representatives in Congress were not supposed to have a say in a matter of such dismaying consequences for the poor and the jobless of this country. Besides abdication of the legislative function the committee was registering another anomaly. It was expressed at the hearing by Gates:

> For several decades our unions and other groups have been coming before the Congress and its committees asking for federal standards on state unemployment insurance benefits. These have always been rejected by the Congress on the grounds that unemployment insurance is a state system and under state jurisdiction. States' rights were invoked whenever it was a question of improving standards of unemployment compensation or welfare. Now that the Administration has made it a matter of reducing and worsening standards we're told that the federal government should impose such standards.

"So much for getting the government off our backs," as Gates put it. On the issue of discussing standards and proposals to cut unemployment benefits as well as welfare, Gates asked the chairman: "Before what body can we go to discuss the merits of making the jobless or the dependent children pay for the budget?" The chairman's reply was bold: "That's a good question."

FAR TOO FEW QUESTIONS have been asked in the national debate about the startling increases of military spending. The Reagan budget provides for a $181 billion increase in such expenditures by 1986. This is *triple* the amount that was spent annually during the Vietnam war. Unfortunately for the security of our country there is practically no discussion about how these enormous sums will be spent, what the military needs of the country are, and what factors go into deciding policy for the nation's common defense. The tens of billions of dollars poured into military equipment that went to the Shah of Iran did nothing to enhance the nation's security. And now still greater expenditures are proposed for arming the monarch of Saudi Arabia, the military thugs of Argentina, and whatever other undependable allies can be uncovered anywhere in the world. The inflationary impact of military expenditures during the Vietnam war, in the absence of taxing to raise such funds, has been widely acknowledged. This will surely be a factor in the Reagan tax-cut proposals along with the pell-mell throwing of money at the military establishment.

The *Wall Street Journal* has been replete with accounts of how throwing money at the military establishment has resulted in extraordinary waste and profligacy. For example, the Electric Boat division of the General Dynamics Corporation is being investigated by the Justice Department on criminal charges with respect to cost overruns on construction of nuclear-powered submarines. Not only have these patriotic ship-building firms overcharged the government, they haven't delivered the submarines as scheduled. Similar problems have arisen in the production of the MI tank by the Chrysler Corporation. Originally contracted

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to cost half a million dollars each, the price to the taxpayers is nearly $3 million per tank. That's bad enough, but despite the sixfold price increase "one of the tank's machine guns remains nearly impossible to aim," the *Wall Street Journal* (April 20) informs us. Besides, the tank treads don't last nearly long enough, the fuel consumption is extravagant, and in general the increased expenditures have in this instance produced tremendous revenues for the corporation, but the tank "is failing in the army's own tests to meet official requirements for durability and reliablity." The very Grumman Corporation that produced buses for New York City that fell apart after a half-hour's service is a major supplier of military armament!

How poorly the security of the country is served by the Reagan budget is accentuated by the drastic cuts for education. Reports from the armed services remind us again and again that they lack skilled and properly educated personnel. The solution proposed by the Administration is to cut federal funds for education at all levels and to institute block grants so that those states that have fallen behind in educational facilities can be encouraged to fall still farther behind.

There remains the overall question, what kind of a nation are we? In the decades since World War II the federal government has stimulated education, especially for children of the poor and for racial minorities. This is being reversed by the Reagan budget, and as Harold Howe III, former U.S. educational commissioner, puts it sorrowfully: "Time was when the Federal Government was a . . . beacon of hope to poor Americans, who found little encouragement from state and local governments. The beacon is dim. . . ."

As though fearful of some future political retribution for their war against the poor, President Reagan's senatorial gladiators, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Jesse Helms of North Carolina, are planning to emasculate the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This Act was the crowning achievement of the civil rights movement and of the Johnson administration in its early years. The threat posed by the Republican-Dixiecrat alliance points up the long and difficult job ahead—rebuilding the Democratic coalition that suffered

Arms and the Citizens

As the Reagan administration busies itself with supplying military hardware to assorted repressive right-wing regimes in Latin America (Guatemala, Argentina, the lot of them), the publication of *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, by Jacobo Timerman (Knopf) could not be more timely. Not that it is likely to influence Administration policy but it will be widely read and, if we are dealing with people who have a smidgeon of conscience, it might abort some military shipments and direct more fervent attention to the matter of human rights.

The *New Yorker* published a lengthy section from Timerman's book. Almost any paragraph is worth quoting:

> This account I am writing—it's painful. Most of the time, I feel paralyzed. I cannot prevent the memories of the tortures from spreading themselves over my daily life. . . . The scenes of beatings, electric shock, solitary confinement, cold baths in winter combine themselves into the final image, and the shout is always the same: the shout with which my interrogators used to insult me when they were really furious—"Jew!"

Mr. Timerman, ultimately released after worldwide protest, now lives in Tel Aviv. He had committed the multiple crimes of publishing a politicaly independent paper, *La Opinion*, in Buenos Aires, for being a prominent member of Argentina's Jewish community and a Zionist, for which he was kidnapped, tortured, incarcerated for several years.

Administration underlings have asserted that while human rights are not high on the foreign policy agenda, they do intend to give it, at least, some lip service. The wink that goes with the assertion makes it clear that it will be more lip than service. But there will be no blinking about propping up corrupt regimes with military supplies. That is part of realpolitik.

Now we know that President Reagan is not much of a reader of heavy stuff, even of a book that reads as easily, if painfully, as this one. However, there are some readers in the Administration. Some have even earned the distinction of being scholars of a sort. May we hope that UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick will be the least bit moved, and perhaps hold a seminar on Jacobo Timerman's book with her deputies —most certainly her deputies! E. G. □

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so grievously in the 1980 elections. The first sounds of revival, still far too weak, are being heard. But it will take time before the impact of the Reagan budget is felt for what it is and before we measure the havoc it will wreak.

P.S. Since the above was written a brutal fact of political life was demonstrated. When the poor were the major target of budget cuts—Food Stamps, CETA, children on welfare, low-cost housing—sounds of protest were muted, members of Congress were hardly heard. But when Social Security was going to be stabbedd, the great majority, which is neither rich nor poor, was directly affected. Protests rang around the country and the Reagan proposals were shot down in the Senate 96 to 0. Will the great mass in the middle learn that their interests are linked to those of the poor? □

Carole Joffe

The Abortion Struggle in American Politics

Despite opinion polls that consistently show the majority of Americans supporting abortion, the status of legal abortion seems more precarious than ever. Antiabortionists in Congress are proceeding on two fronts to outlaw abortion altogether: with a constitutional amendment banning abortion and with "Human Life bills" that would declare a fetus to be a "person" so that abortion would become a criminal act. There continue to be successful efforts to limit the scope of existing abortion services—the Supreme Court recently upheld a parental notification clause for teenagers, and the number of states that still pay for Medicaid abortions has dwindled to a handful.

Why have the antiabortionists been so successful? Why is it proving so difficult for its supporters to defend abortion effectively? The conventional answer is that of single-issue politics: people set against abortion "feel more strongly" than those for it; the abortion opponents are thus willing to take various actions, such as target voting, that the proponents are not willing to use. Sensible as the single-issue argument is, it does not go far enough in illuminating the peculiar character of the abortion fight. It is of course not simply a matter of right-to-lifers feeling more "strongly" than prochoice forces. Rather, many within the prochoice camp have a far more equivocal, and in some cases ambivalent, set of feelings about abortion. The very terminology is a clue to the disparity between the two groups as social movements. The antiabortionists call themselves "prolife." The other side, by calling itself "prochoice"—as opposed to proabortion—is making a statement about the qualified manner with which it approaches abortion. For the latter, abortion represents one of several possibilities to be explored; for the former, how could there be any "choice" but life?

The research I have conducted for the past few years among abortion counselors and nurses—persons overwhelmingly committed to continuing legal abortion—has indicated the restrained and complex responses abortion evokes among its supporters. Abortion is frequently referred to as "sad, but necessary," or the "best of several unattractive alternatives." Moreover, different kinds of abortion evoke different responses. The timing of the abortion, the known characteristics of the fetus, and the client's age and circumstances all shape workers' responses to the procedure. Earlier abortions are typically less emotionally troublesome for workers than later ones; a woman getting an abortion because amniocentesis has revealed a deformed fetus is perceived differently than a third-time aborter who cannot remember to take her contraceptive pills; an 11-year-old's abortion evokes a different response than that of a 34-year-old career woman who claims to want children someday "but not now."

The thoughtfulness exhibited by abortion personnel is admirable and, I would argue, a precondition for the ultimate development of a humane abortion policy. But to the extent that this is shared by others in the prochoice movement, it complicates the immediate task of defending abortion. Social movements in crisis need troops who feel "unequivocally" about the issue. Whatever the political motivations of right-to-life leadership—which many suspect has little to do with abortion per se—it is undeniable that many rank-and-filers genuinely believe they are fighting to defend life. For prochoice forces, a comparable total commitment is much more difficult.

Interestingly, the first phase of the modern prochoice movement, the battle for legalization in the late 1960s and early '70s, seems to have

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resembled much more the current right-to-life movement with regard to the participants' ability to feel fully committed. The targets then were twofold: the "state" that was denying women access to legal abortion, and the illegal abortion services ("back-alley butchers") that were causing thousands of deaths and injuries. The demand, as it was posed then, for "women's control over their own bodies" resonated perfectly with the intoxicating first phase of the new feminist movement. The rage evoked by the tragedies of illegal abortions gave a further sense of certainty to abortion supporters.

The more complex and qualified reactions to abortion emerging now among its defenders stem largely from the very facts of routinization resulting from the 1973 victory. Millions of legal abortions have been performed since then; medically, abortions (especially in the first trimester) have proved to be extremely safe and simple. Most abortions are performed in freestanding clinics, which typically offer the client supportive counseling. The character of abortion services has thus changed dramatically since the early 1970s, and the country as a whole has had a massive experience of legal abortion.

This "normalization experience" has had a sobering effect on many, particularly on abortion workers themselves. Abortion does raise for many workers difficult ethical questions. While those with whom I have spoken remain convinced of the necessity for abortion, their support is now tempered. Since legalization, the relationship between abortion activists and potential abortion seekers has changed significantly. Now many activists are clinic employees, and abortion seekers are "clients." While activists in the early '70s were fighting for the right of women to control their bodies, now counselors are confronted with some women who refuse to take control of their bodies by using contraceptives and who seem willing to use abortion as a means of birth control. In the early '70s activists were outraged by the degrading treatment women received at illegal facilities or in the few hospitals that did perform legal abortions; now counselors are confronted with clients who appear sufficiently unperturbed by their forthcoming abortion that they shun counselors' offers to "talk it over." The transition of abortion from movement issue to "service" has been a complex one, and while abortion workers are still willing to fight for abortion, they will do so more grimly.

FOR THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT, without which the prochoice people cannot hope to win, the fight for abortion has come at an awkward time. Not just abortion but almost all aspects of the feminist agenda seem to be unraveling: the ERA's chances grow dimmer each day; the earning gap between men and women workers has not narrowed; affirmative-action plans have lost what little momentum they had; the Reagan budget attacks on social service will be especially difficult for women since they are disproportionately heads of poor families. And so abortion competes with other issues for scarce movement resources.

A more complicated problem is that of the desired "image" of the feminist movement and how the abortion struggle is to be related to it. The current strength of New Right groups—among which the antiabortionists are merely a part—poses enormously serious questions about past mistakes and future strategies for feminism. As it has become commonplace to observe, much of the right's current ascendancy (and feminism's corresponding weakness) stems from the right's successful appropriation of the "family": from its ability to portray itself as the only social force concerned with "family values," while depicting feminists as antifamily. The summer 1980 White House Conference on the Family brought to a crescendo that brewing Holy War the New Right was so eager to wage over the symbolic control of the meaning of "family" in American society.

Not surprisingly, feminists have begun to issue urgent calls to "retake the family"—to demonstrate that feminists also love children, worry about the elderly, and value committed relations between men and women. Under the best of circumstances, it is difficult to put forth a coherent feminist perspective on the family that speaks to "traditional" concerns while also upholding historic feminist sympathy for "irregular" families such as female-headed households, homosexual parents, and communal households. Given the inseparability of most aspects of antiabortion politics from the broader "profamily" movement, the necessity to vigorously defend abortion at this moment makes the family reclamation project that much more difficult. In light of this, some who identify themselves as feminists have drawn away from the abortion issue as have certain sectors of the nonfeminist left.

Most of organized feminism, though, is gearing up for the struggle. What should they do? One clue to a defense of abortion comes from the internal activities of abortion workers themselves. In observing these workers, I was continually struck by their efforts to place abortion into a larger framework. They did not want their clinics to perform

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only abortions; they themselves did not want to just work on the abortion service; they did not want their clients to think of abortions as the only relevant contraceptive procedure. As both an ideological and practical matter, abortion seemed most manageable to these workers when they could experience it as part of a larger mosaic of human activity. At any given moment some women will require abortions; others will need adequate contraceptive services, and still others good prenatal and obstetrical care. The workers themselves, rather than identifying as "abortion workers," prefer to be seen as "reproductive health workers." Many abortion clinics, under pressure from their staffs, have begun to diversify their services, moving especially into prenatal and obstetrical services.

Moving from the internal events of clinics to the larger political scene, it can be suggested that the abortion struggle must be part of a broader campaign for reproductive freedom. Such a larger agenda does not only imply a call for a full range of reproductive services—from infertility counseling to child care. It also means a willingness to engage in the kind of discussion that legalized abortion and other social and technological changes of the last decade have made necessary; it entails a discussion that has at its center sexuality —not birth control per se—and that attempts to link sexuality to questions of both personal and social responsibility. [1]

Such a strategy would have two advantages. First, the placing of abortion in such a larger context could help make more people willing to commit themselves to an active defense of abortion. Second, it could serve to remind the general public of what the recent preoccupation with abortion as a single issue has tended to obscure: that the differences between most antiabortionists and prochoice forces on matters of sexuality and reproductive rights go far beyond abortion itself. Since there is every reason to believe that most people in this country would find more to agree with in the sexual platform of feminists than in that of the New Right, it is high time that such a platform be articulated.

In certain respects, the current activities of the Reagan administration make such a broad-based campaign easier for prochoice forces to mobilize. The Human Life Amendment, to which Reagan has given verbal support, could outlaw certain birth-control devices as well as abortion. [2] The new director of the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy is a veteran right-to-lifer who has announced her opposition to federal involvement in teen-age contraception. Richard Schweiker, the new head of Health and Human Services, has not only courted right-to-lifers but also has expressed his opposition to federal family planning programs.

The New Right, in complicated collusion with the Reagan administration, has succeeded in dramatically raising the ante. The issue used to be abortion versus contraception. Those persons, in government or out, who did not support abortion could counter their opposition with a strong endorsement of birth control—"so abortion would not be necessary." Indeed, Title X funds, the major conduit for federal family-planning monies, were carefully sent only to those programs that did not include abortion services. At the moment, however, at the highest policy levels, what seems to be under attack is nonprocreative sexuality itself.

IN THE SHORT RUN, what actually becomes of the abortion issue—particularly the two congressional maneuvers mentioned earlier—depends very much on external events, such as the fate of Reagan's economic policies. One often-mentioned scenario is that antiabortion policies will be utilized as a diversionary tactic once it becomes clear that the economic policies are not working. In the long run, the right may have made a strategic error in elevating the abortion issue to an attack on fertility control itself. For antifeminist women too are in the labor force, many of the women who are not working outside the home cannot afford more children, and many people realize that they simply cannot control the sexual behavior of their teen-age children. In other areas, notably day care, [3]

[1] A somewhat similar argument for the necessity to place the defense of abortion in such a broader context has been made recently by Linda Gordon, in "The Long Struggle for Reproductive Rights," *Radical America* 15 (Spring, 1981): 75-88.

[2] Since intrauterine devices and certain low-dosage birth-control pills work by preventing the implantation of the fertilized egg, some have argued that they too would be banned by the human life amendment. Largely because of this ambiguity, some Right-to-Life groups have been opposed to the amendment, arguing it would detract from the goal of banning abortion.

[3] In the early and mid-1970s, day care was a particular target of the emergent profamily movement. Profamily forces lobbied hard and viciously against various attempts at child-care legislation and against individual supporters of day care in Congress. Within the past year or so, however, there has been a marked change. The New Right did not oppose a child-care platform at the White House Conference on the Family. Most significantly, the Family Protection Act—the most comprehensive statement of the New Right family policy—actually calls for tax incentives for employer-provided child care.

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the right seems to have tacitly acknowledged that its core constituency includes women who work outside the home. It is not clear to an outsider why realpolitik seems to have lost out in the related area of birth control.

The developments described here demonstrate that both sides are unlikely to contain abortion as a single issue. For antiabortionists and prochoice forces alike, abortion inevitably spills over into a broader consideration of how women should be leading their lives in this society. The New Right's attempt to channel right-to-lifers' moral objections to abortion into a larger program of sexual retrenchment seems ultimately doomed if the 50-year trend toward increasing paid employment for women continues. The eventual outcome of the abortion struggle is even more hopeful if feminists are successful in the attempt to articulate a compelling platform on sexuality and reproductive freedom. That is, admittedly, a big "if"; but, as is rapidly becoming the new credo of a beleaguered left, crisis presents opportunity as well as danger. □

Samuel Hux

The Democrats and "New Ideas"

Three assumptions of popular political wisdom often heard since the November 1980 debacle do rob one of patience: (1) the Democratic party must learn to forgo the temptations of "ideological politics"; (2) the Democratic party and liberalism in general have run out of ideas and must come up with new ones; (3) the Republican party, like conservatism in general, is now the party of new ideas. The first is simply bad and confused counsel, conflicting insanely with the second, which is a matter of inexact diction: instead of "run out *of* ideas" it should be "run out *on* ideas." The third is simply untrue.

It may not seem to be untrue, but that's because in this nation we have come to call something "new" if it's packaged in a certain way regardless of what's in the package. We hear a great deal about "supply-side" economics; we even hear about the "theology" of supply-side economics. Supply-side economics itself is almost as theological (in the popular sense: obscure, vague, and faith-demanding) as the theology thereof, to which I'll get presently. But what it apparently means is that if you cut taxes, especially in the higher brackets, cut down on social services that serve people especially in the lower brackets, deregulate industries to a considerable degree—than the latter move, promising more profits, will stimulate the higher-bracketed, now with more ready cash, to invest in the deregulated industries and run more courageous entrepreneurial risks. This will create greater wealth, which, top-heavy, will just naturally through the law of capitalist gravity trickle down to those lower-bracketed ones who won't need the social services so much anymore. *And*, furthermore, in spite of the tax cuts, the greater wealth generated by them will create greater tax revenues —although it's not clear what those revenues would be used for, unless it's the military, which is not to suffer from the tax cuts in the first place. The scheme has a certain elegance, true; but it's difficult to see what's new about it—just the old "trickle-down" theory given a more up-beat name.

What's newest is the "theological" aspect. American conservatives in the past have preferred to avoid quaint notions in favor of a more hard-nosed ethic: render unto the Lord what is the Lord's, and unto the seizer what he can seize. But if you want the respectable ranks of *neo*conservatism to expand, you can't be so gross. So, as George Gilder for instance would have it, the capitalist ethic is not at all a matter of acquisitiveness, nothing like the efficient greed Adam Smith thought a great productive irony; it's a matter of community built through gift-giving, which imposes the obligation to gift-give in return. And since the gifts that create the greatest obligation are those that are worth more to the receiver than to him who gives, this implies "an imaginative sensitivity to the needs of others." Verily, "'Give and you will be given unto' is its fundamental theme." Since we're speaking of the "theological," this sort of thing used to be called *casuistry*.

But it's amusing that economic-political conservatives, who have so long twitted liberals for an assumed belief in man's quite simple altruistic nature, have now come around to donning romantic fustian themselves. And it ought to be a reminder to liberals, to Democrats, that they need an ideology. I doubt the connection is apparent; I'll try to make it so.

In the absence of *a party that embodies an*

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ideology, that is, a coherent system of interlocking socioeconomic ideas, a voter has nothing to vote for but (1) "a man" ("I vote the man, not the party label") whom he must take on faith, or (2) some single issue, which may mean, since he has but one vote, the ignoring of some other single issue that someone else may stand for. If each politician is running on his own ticket whatever the party label (which is what the dissociation of party from ideology encourages), then we don't really have much to rely on but hopes of the politician's good and honest nature. And if the voter is voting for this single issue and not that one (which is what the dissociation of party from ideology encourages), then we don't really have much to rely on, if we're thinking of the common good, except the hope that voters will be somewhat altruistic in their choices of single issues and not vote merely their own narrow self-interest.

On the other hand, when politicians represent parties, and parties are the manifestations of ideologies, then one votes by necessity politician-party-ideology, and the common good does not depend upon the accidents of altruism; for as I've written elsewhere, "It's to the advantage of the politically weak that a ticket means an ideology, for among the interlocking concepts that make an ideology may ride, like a rider to a bill, some notion that enriches the lives of a few while meaning little or nothing to most," and the good of those few does not depend upon the often-absent good will of most (*Commonweal*, February 13, 1981).

The assumption behind my argument, of course, is that the purpose of an ideology is the service of people. But when pundits and politicos say that the Democratic party needs "new ideas," I fear they're simply saying that something that looks different is needed to get the party elected. Would neo-supply-side be acceptable? Neo-Social Darwinism? Granted, new ideas are needed, they're *always* needed. But how much more profound is that than saying that times change, the weather's different every year, or you can't get a decent egg-cream anymore? What we don't need are clichés. And we have some "old ideas" whose implementation is long past due, such as comprehensive national health insurance. It's a startling vulgarity of American life that illness should remain a source of profit. Elixirs don't trickle down.

I SAID EARLIER that liberalism is running out *on* ideas instead of running out *of* them. I'm only half right. In a sense liberalism itself *has* run out of ideas. What's true of American liberalism is what's often said of conservatism: it generates no ideas of its own, rather responds reflexively to ideas of other camps. Setting aside the notion of liberalism as a methodology, instrumentality, an openness to what works, what Dewey called the "principle of judgment by consequences," liberalism hasn't come up with ideas through its own energy more than a couple of times in this century: perhaps the civil rights legislation and the turn-of-century Progressive campaigns for "good government," neither of which an honest conservatism couldn't have initiated. The economic idea we associate most with it, Keynesianism, was elaborated by an English establishmentarian whose great ambition was to organize a railroad or run a trust—hardly your prototypical liberal thinker.

The source of "liberal" ideas, the source that liberalism seems to be running out on, and perhaps is running out on because it fears the logic of "what's to be done now," is democratic socialism. Maybe that's the reason—not just an electoral defeat—for the crisis in liberalism today: it's been living on some ideas dealt it in the New Deal, ideas that in other nations were clearly identified as social democratic. And if liberalism is to be something more than tactical softening of the more ungenerous urges of conservatism, it really has no choice but to turn to the democratic socialism without which its brain would have rotted long ago.

This is no suggestion that the Democratic party must become the "Social Democratic party" or "Democratic Labor party." (Frankly I think it must, but know it won't. Certainly not officially.) But while Democratic party regulars prate about "new ideas" and cast curious glances at the supply-siders and consider the merits of neoconservatism ("Can we be that and just call ourselves neoliberals instead?") there is furious mental activity going on back at the socialist source. (I am careful to use the phrase "democratic socialism." I mean to avoid thereby those sectarians and independent high-rollers of the rhetorical left who however much they talk about real democracy merely test the validity of an idea by how "radical" it is, meaning how offensive it probably is to the American people: a game.)

At any rate, while the Democratic party has for a long time borrowed *social* ideas from democratic socialism—both those it's institutionalized, such as social security, unemployment compensation, and so forth, and those it keeps "tactically" abandoning, such as socialized medicine—it clearly has no *economic* ideas; try this, try that,

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this and that often in absolute conflict. For one glaring instance: while housing and transportation are judged to be key industries, and while housing had become crucially scarce and one giant automotive firm was falling apart and the government was spending giant sums to prop it up, and while both housing and transportation are both obviously dependent upon people borrowing money, the Carter administration appointed to run the Federal Reserve Board a man whose announced policy was to make money as tight as possible. Trying everything at once means you have no ideas, only a patchwork of reflexes—now a little fiscal, then a little monetarist policy—to get past this slump or that inflation; and with the next cycle, well . . . we'll try something else, or probably the same thing.

Meanwhile, among democratic socialists the merits of "market socialism" are debated, as is worker participation in management beyond profit-sharing, as are methods of socializing investment. And while socialists have a reputation for ignoring hard questions about the creation of wealth and talking only about its distribution—undeservedly so, as if socialism were a form of flower-childhood—democratic socialists debate methods to facilitate what only corporate board members are assumed to think about: capital formation. Market socialism, decentralized public ownership married to market principles, is clearly a considerable *structural* change (both of the market and the meaning of nationalization); but so are worker participation and socially responsible investment (even if they'd probably be more palatable to the Democratic party). If accumulated wealth is invested in socially needed productivity and not in tax-sheltered and nonproductive but merely profitable ventures, if corporations cannot move out on labor looking for cheaper hands because labor must be party to decisions, then these *are* structural changes.

This is no advertisement. The Democratic party, or its intelligent segment, knows where it has to look if it's not to be an adjunct to Republicanism. But, on the other hand, it has to be helped a little; it's not exceptionally brave.

PACKAGING. WELL, I find it offensive. But I find the structuralization of injustice and privilege more offensive. In an appreciative review of Martin Carnoy's and Derek Shearer's *Economic Democracy* some months ago, Michael Harrington remarked that he takes "economic democrat" to be "a genteel way of saying 'socialist' in a politically underdeveloped society." I understand, and I confess to some annoyance at the avoidance of an honorable name. But perhaps the "economic democrats" have a point. And maybe a quid pro quo could be arranged, democratic socialism saying to Democratic liberalism something like this: here are the ideas; claim them, name them—but in return please don't refer to the Soviet and Chinese blocs as the "socialist" camps. I think that's only fair, since the Democratic party has often connived at the misrepresentation of socialism, which now makes it hard for it to turn forthrightly to its source of ideas. Ultimately it's going to have to turn there.

Irving Kristol has written that supply-side economics is "the last, best hope" for American capitalism, and if it fails, conservatives can "forget all about political economy. Someone else will be in charge of that." I am not at all sure that it will fail; I think it could very well succeed, and condemn itself through its success: trickle, trickle . . . drip . . . drop. . . . If the Democratic party is then to "be in charge of that," the worst thing liberals could do (*because people will suffer*) is to concede that conservatism has "new ideas" and to follow the advice to forgo ideological politics. □

George McAlmon

Foul-Up Management in the Corporations

There is something shameless about Ford Motor Company executives abandoning the Company's 75-year-old free-trade policy to seek government protection from Japanese imports. No doubt, Ford is having its trouble selling cars. Ford reported a 1980 loss of $1.54 billion. Detroit's annual losses set world records with Chrysler at $1.7 billion and General Motors at $763 million. The losses in 1980 for the three companies exceeded $4 billion. General Motors finished the year in the red for the first time since 1921. The game is being played out in the American, Japanese, and German dealers' showrooms around the country. Few can remember a period when it has

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been slower on the American model-showroom floors. Yet, because of demand there is often a three-month wait for delivery of the new foreign models. Import share for domestic auto sales for early 1981 set a new record of 29 percent.

Imports of foreign cars and trucks are up 50 percent and domestic production has fallen by 25 percent since 1976. According to a recent Ford press release, more than 40 percent of American auto workers were out of work, 85 supplier plants closed, and 900 Amerian car dealerships have failed with a loss of 100,000 dealership employees during 1980.

While Ford blames the foreigners for its inability to compete, Chrysler points its finger at "government regulations" as a cause of the domestic industry's malaise.

The facts are that Japanese and German auto companies pay their workers almost the same as and often more than American workers; they pay a duty to the U.S. on the imported vehicle; and they must comply with the same regulations as the domestic producer.

While auto executives rail at foreigners and the government, they continue to import whole foreign models for sale under American labels, converting our manufacturers into mere distributors—a recognition of foreign superiority.

The American auto companies have been mismanaged. After the oil shock of 1972, Japanese, German, and other foreign managements were able to foresee the increase of energy prices, the need for quality control and compact models. But the U.S. companies ignored for years all the obvious signs of market change and relied upon the usual industry ballyhoo to maintain sales of their outmoded sizes.

While domestic car factories have closed, foreign companies have opened U.S. plants and have more planned. These foreign-operated plants have their production sold months before it is even built. Their employees, locations, and markets are all American. Their obvious advantage is superior management.

A curious symptom in the Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors situations is that the majority of the same directors who made the deplorable business decisions during the 1970s still remain in control of the companies. They nominated themselves for reelection in 1980 to their respective boards of directors and were duly installed for another year, with all the same salaries and privileges they have always enjoyed. None of these directors and officers has been discharged or penalized for the failures that have cost stockholders, suppliers, dealers, and employees billions of dollars. Of course, all large corporations are controlled by a system of incumbency. Officers of these big companies own infinitesimal percentages of stock in the companies they run. They propose their own election to shareholders by mailed proxy solicitations at company expense. Incumbents or their replacement nominees are always elected at the annual shareholders' meetings. Self-selected and self-perpetuated, the boards are in important areas unaccountable to anybody. It is an incumbent's paradise.

A recent classic confrontation at SCM Corporation confirms the invincibility of an incumbent directorate. An all-star slate of noted candidates led by William F. Rockwell, Jr., retired CEO of Rockwell International Corporation, challenged the incumbent SCM directors during an intensive six-month campaign for stockholder votes at the October annual meeting. The incumbents, who have controlled the company for years while owning 0.6 percent or less of company stock, were charged by the challengers, who own four times as much company stock, with a variety of substantiated bad management decisions and self-indulgences. Both sides went to the media with press releases and full-page *Wall Street Journal* ads. The incumbents won with a 26 percent margin. The challengers spent $1 million of their money in the losing effort, and the incumbents spent probably more of the Company's.

IT IS TIME TO CHANGE the system of selection and removal of directors (which include the top executives). The importance of the giant companies is so high that the nation must have better input into their planning and operation. These corporations have responsibilities in areas besides profits and production, including safeguards to eliminate bribery and illegal political gifts, foreign political involvement, misuse of the political action-committee system, industry-wide price fixing, consumer product safety and warranties, pollution control, on-the-job safety, the sale abroad of technology, need for increased research and development, the important social effects of plant closings, and excessive executive compensation and benefits (especially by losing companies).

Decisions of momentous consequence are now being made by the managements of big industry without the knowledge of the public or their stockholders, some of which can disastrously affect us all within a few years. These decisions

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concern the future of steel, petroleum production, autos, alternate energy sources, research and development, and the sale abroad of American technology.

There is no guarantee that independent directors will automatically improve management, but we can't afford not to try them. At the least, small (as well as large) stockholders, employees, dealers, and the public should be be sitting on the boards.

The system has delivered into the hands of a few largely unknown men, who are essentially untouchable and irremovable in their offices, tremendous concentrated economic and political power. It is no coincidence that these men (with a rare, token woman or ethnic among them) largely and actively support the same social and political doctrines. The 500-plus members of the executive committees of the 100 largest corporations may be as a group the most powerful men in America. Democracy, as the founders of our country knew, will not survive where a few will hold excessive power.

Penn Central and Lockheed first required national bail-out, then Chrysler, and now Ford asks for subsidy in the form of import restrictions. If the people must pay the social price for their failures, then the people should be represented in their operation. □

Benjamin R. Barber

A Case for Universal Service

Military conscription is once again on the national agenda, but neither conservatives nor liberals, neither proponents nor opponents of registration seem interested in confronting the underlying issues of the place of national service in the life of a democratic republic. Thus President Carter linked his draft registration program to a get-tough policy with the Russians, while President Reagan now is satisfied to associate his less enthusiastic position with his vague campaign against big government.

Jerry Watts, in his original *Dissent* note, "The Draft and the Poor," Fall 1980, also spent most of his energy proving that the volunteer army is prejudicial to minorities *and* military efficiency, while his critics (Lacefield, Levinson, and Schwartz—"Another View of the Draft," Winter 1981) reassert the anti-Carter line, which interprets the draft as an instrument of American imperialism and militarism.

Not a word in all of this about citizenship, political obligation as a corollary of political right, civic education as a concomitant of service, or about the corrosive effect on democracy of professional armies.

America's professional army is in fact one more unhappy example of how completely America has acquiesced in the professionalization of its governing functions. Yet democracy can only survive as the government of amateurs. Representatives are amateur lawmakers, juries are amateur judges, elected officials are amateur administrators, and conscripts are amateur soldiers.

Professionals, experts, and other mercenaries may perform various governmental tasks more efficiently, but they undermine democracy at its root: for to be free is not simply to be free *from* government, but to be *self-governing*. The rights to which critics of registration and the draft regularly appeal are empty promises unless they are sustained by corresponding responsibilities. A democracy's true measure is to be found less in its rights and freedoms than in the spiritedness with which a citizenry is prepared to defend them.

THE WORLD is cluttered with paper democracies and pen-and-ink republics dead but for their dusty constitutions. To give the American Constitution renewed vitality I would propose not simply national military conscription but a radical democratic alternative to both the volunteer army and male, military draft registration: Universal Citizen Service—a program of national service that would enlist every American citizen, male and female alike, in a Universal Citizen Corps for one to two years of either military or nonmilitary service. Such a service could guarantee American military preparedness, enhance the quality of citizen participation, equalize service among women and men, rich and poor, black and white, and generally revitalize the spirit of civic responsibility on which freedom rests.

Service in the Corps would be a concomitant of citizenship and would last at least 12 months (perhaps 18 or 24). To minimize career disruption and maximize flexibility, individuals might be permitted to choose a service period at any time between their 18th and 25th birthdays.

The Corps would comprise five branches in-

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cluding an Armed Forces option. Except in time of declared wars, citizens could choose freely among them. In addition to the Armed Forces, which would continue under the direct supervision of the Department of Defense but would recruit exclusively through the Citizen Corps, the Universal Citizen Service would comprise an Urban Projects Corps, a Rural Projects Corps, an International (Peace) Corps, and a Special Services Corps.

Before entering the corps of their choice (including the military), individuals would undergo a rigorous three-month period of introductory training in physical fitness and in applied skills such as mechanics, agriculture, tool use, as well as a prudently delimited course of civic education (which might include instruction in parliamentary and electoral skills, community structure and organization, elementary social science, and American history). Final choice of a service corps could be reserved until completion of introductory training. Initiation into chosen corps would entail a shorter period of more specialized training pertinent to its defining projects and social tasks. This training period would culminate in the assignment of corps members to "communities" of perhaps 100 (divided into "community teams" of 25), which could be deployed in appropriate urban, rural, or international settings. Their activities would focus on projects that the tax-supported public sector cannot afford and in which the private sector finds no profit, and would be conceived and carried out with the cooperation and guidance of responsible local authorities and community groups.

Urban projects might include homesteading and "sweat equity" assistance, park restoration, graffiti removal, light road, beach, and water work, assistance to shut-ins and the elderly, traffic control, day care and remedial education, and a variety of paraprofessional tasks.

Rural projects could include conservation and ecological programs, flood and water control, rural road repair and maintenance, town and village construction and restoration programs, reforestation and irrigation projects, and disaster relief.

The International Corps would be patterned after and incorporate the Peace Corps, but it would work under the close supervision of host countries and of the appropriate international agencies.

The Special Services Corps would provide all branches with vital special skills (medical, communication, transportation, construction, and administration) and would act as a secretariat for the Citizen Corps, with responsibility for introductory training, organizational structure, project planning, intergovernmental liaison, budgeting, corps deployment, and so forth.

Universal Citizen Service would solve a number of the practical and legal questions that presently plague planners. It would enable women to serve equally with men, without forcing them directly into military duty (though the military *would* be an option). It would distribute the burden of responsibility on every American equally and help, through the "communities" it created, to remove the divisions that are being exacerbated by the volunteer army.

As an integral aspect of citizen training and a substitute for pure military conscription, it would be a fair and worthwhile alternative to the draft. Critics of a peacetime draft might be mollified, and alienated liberals would be given an opportunity to put their principles into practice—while the military would have a chance to build an army that would be both more efficient and more democratic. For though Universal Citizen Service could not guarantee the Pentagon the high standards afforded by universal military conscription, it would be a tremendous improvement over the volunteer army while preserving meaningful choice for Americans, above all those prepared to serve but reluctant to soldier in peacetime.

The recruits the Armed Forces did draw under these conditions would have undergone useful introductory training and would comprise young men and women attracted to military duty rather than those fleeing from hopeless civilian lives. Given the obligation to serve in one of the corps, and the size of the annual pool (about 4 million women and men), considerable numbers of able, educated Americans could be expected to select the military option. If necessary, other inducements (a shortened term of service, reserve duty, and so forth) could be offered to enhance the military option's attractiveness.

The greatest advantages of Universal Citizen Service would be civic rather than military. It could offer many of the undisputed virtues of military service: fellowship and camaraderie, common activity, team work, service for and with others, and a sense of community. Yet in place of military hierarchy it could offer equality; in place of obedience, cooperation; and in place of us/them conflict, a sense of mutuality and interdependence.

THE DEBATE ABOUT THE DRAFT has for too long been isolated from the ideals of democratic citizen-

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ship. By tying the argument for service to political posturing and tactical anticommunism, both such proponents as former President Carter and critics as Lacefield and his coauthors encourage the young to confound citizen service with chauvinism and military duty with jingoism, thereby leading many of them to reject both.

A generation that already seems confused about the relationship between rights and responsibilities is further alienated from citizenship while America's enemies enjoy the spectacle of a government that cannot get its people to write down their names and addresses without screaming "fascism!" and "involuntary servitude!"

Exercising the responsibilities of citizenship is not involuntary servitude but the essence of political liberty. Fascism feeds off passivity and complacent privatism, not off a confident and self-reliant citizenry.

The issue is not imperialism, it is citizenship. And the solution for the ills of democracy, as Jefferson noted a long time ago, is not less but more democracy. Universal Citizen Service is a great deal more democracy. □

Afghanistan: One Year Later

A Conversation with Olivier Roy

Our readers will remember the extremely informative article by Olivier Roy on Afghanistan in our Winter 1981 issue, which we translated from our sister publication in Paris, Esprit. *We now provide some excerpts from a conversation, again taken from* Esprit, *in which M. Roy expresses his views on more recent developments in Afghanistan.* — EDS.

OLIVIER MONGIN: Since you have recently had the opportunity to travel to Pakistan and Afghanistan for the AICF (Action internationale contre la faim), it seems useful to come back to your first analysis of the situation in Afghanistan that appeared in *Esprit* in May 1980 [*Dissent*, Winter 1981]. In order to give us a picture of the forces that are now at work, could you describe the different components of what we call here the Afghan resistance? How does this resistance appear, what form does it take: as a unified movement or as a loose agglomeration of guerrilla groups?

OLIVIER ROY: You have to differentiate between two kinds of resistance; the one abroad and that inside the country, and understand that there are links between them. The resistance abroad is the one that is most talked about in Europe because it has offices, press services, and so on. Its center is located in Peshawar, Pakistan. Within this resistance abroad, there exists only one party in the modern sense of the term, meaning an ensemble of organized militants centered around a program. It is the Hezbi-Islami, or Integrationist Muslim party.

The other parties are actually various interconnected (client) family groups, each headed by one big family. The best known of these are the National Front of the Gilayni family and the party of the Modjadidi family. Both are ancient Sufi orders that now are in fact completely secularized. Other, small parties are also part of the resistance in Peshawar, but they don't carry much weight. Only the major parties have active members inside Afghanistan. The Hezbi (Integrationist Muslim) party has active militants. . . . It is strong in the region of Jelalabad, and it is also active in Nuristan, where in each village there are about ten Hezbi militants. They maintain contact with each other, and they form guerrilla commandos; I have seen these commandos work more against the rest of the Afghan population than against the Russians, but that may be my personal impression.

The two most prominent families—the Gilayni and the Modjadidi—have networks of active members inside Afghanistan, mainly in the Pashtoon regions, in the south and the west of the country. There the heads of families or of tribes owe them allegiance, which, however, does not at all mean agreement on a political program: it is based simply on personal relationships. As in all personal dealings, there is an exchange, which means that the members of the big families who are abroad will supply the members of the resistance who fight inside the country with arms, food, and money. . . . There is no strategy. The Gilayni family, for instance has not chosen an overall military leader who might plan and coordinate the resistance fight of its members inside Afghanistan. The resistance inside the country is of a general kind: it means that one fights in Afghanistan. This is truly a war of the people. It is always difficult to

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give statistics, but I would say that about 95 percent of the population is against the present government.

The cities are occuppied by the military forces of the official government and by the Russians. There is no martial tradition among the city people. So, on the one hand, they refuse to pay taxes and to join the army, and on the other, they perform acts of terrorism. The time of grand demonstrations has passed.

In the countryside, there is a general uprising, but quite in accordance with traditional structures. In the areas where the tribal structure has remained very strong, the people follow the head of the clan. Where it is weak or nonexistent, the village is their basic unit. This does not mean that all the people are fighting continually. They fight whenever the armies of the government or the Russians approach. Otherwise people try to live their normal lives. Any form of state or governmental representation has been eliminated. There are no longer any schools, no tax collectors, no public officials. This does not mean that they have been physically eliminated; most have returned to their villages. Word is out that they often use their skills in activities related to the resistance. Teachers, for example, serve as secretaries, nurses, military leaders, and help to establish ties with other regions. Still, it is an entirely fragmented and parochial resistance.

O.M.: But is there not more of an attempt within Afghanistan than there is abroad to achieve some tentative unification of the resistance forces?

O.R.: No, but this is probably what is new in Afghanistan: the affirmation of a national solidarity. Before the Russian invasion, the term Afghan meant essentially the Pashtoons, the dominant ethnic group. If, for example, somebody said, "I speak Afghan," that meant "I speak Pashto." Now you can see the people of Afghanistan claiming that they belong to Afghanistan, are Afghan *as a nation*, against the foreign invader. This change in their mentality is very important, but it does not lead to new structures; the resistance has not brought about new political or administrative structures, which could contain the scheme for a new society. Nor is there the necessity for such a scheme; for the type of warfare the resistance people fight does not require it and does not require such coordination.

How do the resistance people in Afghanistan fight? For example, all men in each village carry arms, and they will shoot if the village or the valley is attacked. At times when they are not attacked, small commando groups of young people are formed, of young men who want to fight just exactly because there is no formal obligation to do so. The people of the village give them the best weapons, the best clothes and food, and these young men go to fight in the borderlands of their ethnic territory. The Nuristani, for example, go to fight at the borders of the Pashtoon territory, where Khalki barracks are set up; they fight for three weeks or a month and return to their families at the time of the harvest or whenever they are exhausted, or to take care of personal business. It is a constant coming and going. They fight under the authority of those whom they call their "commanders," and who are always from their village or from their tribe, but not necessarily scions of the great families. Of course, if in one of the great families someone stands out as a military leader, he will be accorded immediate authority. But that commander might very well be a peasant who has proved to be a competent leader. A commander leads 30, or 40, and at most 200 or 250 men. These guerrillas fight mostly in small units. They ambush convoys (when they fight outside the villages) or blockade a fort, but rarely do they manage to take one because the forts are defended by artillery, helicopters, and mine fields. . . .

The guerrilla fighters besiege, and hinder the free circulation of convoys—they simply affirm the presence of the resistance. This is a totally fragmented but omnipresent and absolutely committed resistance. But it does not at all essentially absorb the general population in its activities; its minutely aimed skirmishes extend only to the guerrillas involved, who are constantly on the warpath, while the rest of the population goes about its everyday life. This applies to the zones where the Russians do not directly intervene. In the regions where the Russians constantly intervene (the Ghazni, the Jauran, the Kounar, and so on), the civilian population has been evacuated and only the fighters remain.

O.M.: Could we now turn to the other side, and talk about Soviet strategy as well as about the official Afghan army, which also takes part in the fight against the resistance?

O.R.: The Afghan army—the Russians had planned to create a new army of privileged and committed people. The pay indeed is excellent. An officer earns five times as much as a teacher, and a non-com three times as much. . . . Before the Russian invasion, a year ago, there was an Afghan

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army numbering 100,000 men, remarkably well-equipped, and run by Khalki officers. The Khalki were the most "popular" group within Afghanistan's Peoples' Democratic party. Their base was composed of teachers, students, some landless peasants, who all then had rallied to the regime, and army officers.

The Afghan army now has been drained, and many soldiers have deserted; it is estimated that it has lost at least two-thirds of its strength, and I can state that the remainder is not too ready to fight. Why? Because the Russian invasion is really working against the Khalki, and for the Partchami, the ethnic group that makes up the other major branch of the party; so the Khalki do not identify with the Soviet invasion. The Khalki, on the other hand, are also nationalists, and on several occasions whole garrisons have revolted against the Soviet advisers—and were massacred as a result. The [Khalki] troops now are conscripts who are kept on after having served their time, and who dream of nothing but deserting, not necessarily to join the resistance but just to go home. . . .

I think that the Russians have intervened in Afghanistan somewhat against their own will. They intervened because the Afghan regime was about to collapse. The Russians had hoped for a satellite with an army that could cope with the interior resistance by itself; they intervened because they felt they had no other choice. But it is clear that from the moment they intervened they had a strategy. Now this strategy does cause problems—and there are two facts that one just can't understand. How come the Russian soldiers are so ineffective? Why are they unable to seize the means for decisive action? And why can they hold only the big cities? This they can do because in Kabul, for example, a Russian tank is stationed ever 50 meters all around the city. Yet, the Russians do have many bases, and they have succeeded in keeping the country's main roads open. But that is about all.

From time to time, on the other hand, operations are exactly targeted and very deadly. They involve about 100 tanks, 50 to 100 armed helicopters, and several thousand men. These operations have resulted in the apocalyptic reports that Mike Barry heard in Peshawar. When such a force descends upon a valley there is a massacre. But this is not genocide: they kill some hundreds or thousands of people in an area of some 20, some 30, or 40 kilometers, and that is all—if one can put it that way. Then they stop and retreat to their bases. There is neither a systematic policy of genocide nor of appeasement—and therein lies the problem. Where will all this end, without any policy?

O.M.: According to your analysis, it seems that there is a kind of status quo that could be prolonged for quite some time. But if the Afghan resistance were to become truly an armed resistance, would that not modify this situation?

O.R.: Yes, but we must also recognize that, in the Russian camp, there are certainly important contradictions. They surely must have their militaristic officers, those who want to fight to the finish. Right now they proceed very carefully in Afghanistan; but they must have generals who say that, by doubling or tripling the expeditionary corps, they could wipe out the Afghan resistance.

Now, if the Afghans should achieve a more intensive level of combat, the opinion of those generals would gain more weight in the Russian army. If, for example, the number of Russian casualties were to increase considerably, because, and if, the Afghans were to receive better arms, you may be sure that such Soviet generals would say: "Stop fighting this dull and difficult war, let's fight an offensive war; let's attack the underground." If the Americans, on the other hand, gave arms to the Afghan resistance parties abroad, this would ipso facto strengthen the resistance fighters inside the country—that is, those of the party that could bring in modern arms. For whole areas would pledge allegiance to this party in order to get some of these arms. And might it not be conceivable that some kind of proper army of the Afghan resistance might be created and trained by the militants of such a party? But no . . . I don't think so. I think allegiance will, as it always is in Afghanistan, be purely a personal matter, and that such party militants would distribute new arms in the same fashion they do right now. . . . This would result in a step-up of combat and more losses on the Soviet side; but in order to really change the situation, the whole Afghan resistance struggle would need thorough coordination—and this one can not yet foresee. So far, there is no important front that extends over a larger geographical area: where there are homogeneous combat units, the zones are small—a single valley, for example. But where there are many combatants over a large area, as in Jelalabad, one can find three or four different organizations among the resistance fighters. Arms might pass, then, through one organization to the others who would ally themselves with it, but the divisions would remain. . . .

Translated by ELFIN VOGEL □

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Malcolm Coad

Murder in Guatemala

Just inside the campus grounds of the National Autonomous University of San Carlos (USAC), Guatemala City, stop the buses that carry students between the campus and the city center. On Monday, July 14, 1980, the 8-black pulled in with its load of students taking vacation crammer courses. It was 8:45 AM, the busiest time for arrivals at the campus. As the bus stopped, two trucks one red and the other white, both without markings or number-plates drove into the northern lane of the road. Between them they contained something over 20 men, dressed in civilian clothes and carrying 9 and 45 mm machine guns and shotguns. As they approached the bus, the men opened fire. Some disembarking students were killed or disabled instantly. As the others ran for cover in the gardens of the Rector's office or threw themselves prone on the ground, the truck turned, while the firing continued. The white truck stopped to allow its occupants to take stable firing positions on the tarmac and pick off their victims one by one. The vehicles then drove off. A few minutes later, though, the white one reappeared, to ambush a pickup truck carrying three engineering students. All three were killed. The final death toll of these attacks was 13, with over 40 wounded. . . .

Until recently all such murders had taken place off campus. Except in the regions where USAC premises have frequently been bombed, shot up or otherwise vandalized by troops or "unidentified men" (as the squads are known in official parlance) the authorities had limited their activities on the campus to surveillance and infiltration. . . . Agents of one intelligence service or another are frequently discovered there by the students' well-organized lookout system; we saw copies of identity documents taken from some of these.

Nevertheless, University members, while knowing that direct intervention would come at any time, had felt marginally safer on the campus than outside it. The July 14 massacre was a horrific indication of an apparent stepping-up of harassment. It was not the first. This had come at about 4:30 on the afternoon of June 10, when two men attempted to abduct Victor Valverth, an engineering student and member of the University's Governing Body, from his car outside the Engineering Faculty cafeteria. When Valverth's cries led to intervention by other students, the men shot him three times in the chest and attempted to escape. One of them succeeded, though not before his ID card, showing him to be a member of the *Guardia de Hacienda* (Border Patrol), had been taken from him. The other, a military intelligence agent, was less fortunate. As the students prepard to strip him, paint slogans on his back, and leave him unharmed beside the Avenida Petapa—their usual way of dealing with *orejas* ("ears") found on the campus—a truckload of armed soldiers appeared. They had apparently been overseeing the abduction attempt, had realized something had gone wrong, and had decided to intervene—the first time that troops had entered the USAC campus. By this time, some 3,000 students had gathered. The arrival of the soldiers compounded the anger aroused by Valverth's shooting, and their fury boiled over. The troops prudently withdrew, leaving their colleague to his fate. He died with his head staved in by a rock wielded by a student who our guide on the campus believed had a relative missing after abduction by the security forces. The agent's body was burned with petrol. It was a brutal death; but the only such act of retaliation by USAC members throughout the long purgatory to which they have been subjected. . . .

The systematic butchery set no teletypes humming; no news-hungry reporters flew to Guatemala, nor was any reproving voice heard. The world turned its back while Guatemala underwent a long Saint Bartholomew's night.

Professors of San Carlos smile wryly if you talk to them of the "free world" and its concern for human rights. The reasons are not hard to find. In Guatemala, as so often in the Third World, repression and control of economic resources by a partnership of multinational corporations and a tiny local oligarchy go hand in hand. "We suffer," say the professors ironically, "because we are rich." Guatemala's natural resources are abundant, but in the hemisphere only the people of Haiti live worse. The great wealth extracted from coffee and cotton crops, cattle, sugar, nickel (and, soon, oil) is drained abroad, consumed by the local elite, or, sometimes, invested in limited industrialization

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Excerpted, with permission, from a lengthy report, based on a statement by USAC's psychology faculty, in *Index on Censorship*.

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that is export-oriented and brings little benefit to the national economy. It is not used to grow the food the people need. . . .

So, two-thirds of the population must scrape an average per-capita income of $35 from the land left over from the great estates and from seasonal work on them, while 80 percent of the children are malnourished. Such a system breeds resistance and repression.

The 1954 invasion was triggered by a moderate land reform that threatened the unused holdings of, among others, United Fruit Co. This force was organized, equipped and participated in by the U.S. Since then, Guatemala has been a disguised military dictatorship. All presidents, with one exception, have been military men put into power either by coups led by dissident factions in the military or by elections characterized by the banning of opposition parties, terror, fraud and widespread abstention. The one civilian president, Julio Cesar Mendez Montenegro (1955-70), had to sign a pact with the military before taking office.

Direct U.S. involvement in repression, beyond mere aid and training, occurred again in the mid-1960s. U.S. advisers planned, and Green Berets and troops from the Panama-based Southern Command took part in the counterinsurgency campaign launched in the Zacapa and Izabal provinces in 1966 by Colonel, later President, Osorio. This campaign killed 10,000 civilians in two years. Immediately aimed at some 300 guerrillas led by nationalist army officers, its long-term object was to wipe out any future support for opposition, not only for general security reasons but because of the need to secure "investment stability" for a major, and highly unpopular, nickel mining operation being planned there by a U.S.-Canadian Consortium, EXMIBAL.

Violence did not stop with the defeat of the guerrillas. The *New York Times* estimated that in the six months beginning November 1970 at least 2,000 people died. The committee formed by the families of abducted and missing people recorded 15,325 cases of disappearance at the hands of the security forces in 1970-75. The majority of such victims have been poor peasants and rural workers, but with the emergence in the mid-1970s of strong grass-roots peasants' organizations, as well as new guerrilla groups with firm roots among the people and steadily increasing support, counterinsurgency and repression intensified. By the end of 1980 deaths among civilians were running at about 20 each day. Very few of these, it must be said, were inflicted by the guerrillas.

Most of this violence took place in the countryside, but a new factor in the 1970s was the escalating use of terror in urban areas. The reason for this is that for the first time the regime found itself confronted by an organized and coordinated mass movement given political expression in 1979 by the formation of the (illegal) Frente Democratico Contra la Represion (Democratic Front Against Repression). Legal and illegal trade unionism had increased markedly, while social groups such as white-collar workers, professional people, and the church were speaking out increasingly against inequality and government-sponsored violence. The July 14 campus massacre, and the abduction a month previously of some 30 leaders of the CNT trade union confederation as they held a meeting within yards of two central police stations and the presidential palace, are merely the most dramatic instances so far of the authorities' response. None of the trade union leaders, who included a journalist, have been seen again. . . . By the mid-1970s, USAC was targeted as a "center of the subversion." From 1975 on, death threats against its members became regular. The 1976 earthquake, which wrought its worst destruction in poor areas, demonstrated dramatically the inequities of Guatemalan society, and led to strong criticism of the government by USAC members inivolved in reconstruction. In June 1976, bomb attacks were made against the Rector, Roberto Valdeavellano, and Dr. Guillermo Rojas Mazariegos, USAC's representatives on the National Earthquake Reconstruction Committee. The terror had begun in earnest. . . .

As repression continues, so do fears that the regime may take the final step: direct intervention. Its most right-wing sectors have been advocating this for some time, together with the transfer of its resources to the country's three small private universities. Such an action would inevitably involve military occupation, the shattering of the USAC's hard-won autonomous status, its probable breakup, and almost certainly many more deaths. Some on the campus believe that such an intervention would be too costly for the regime's reputation and generally counterproductive. Others, thinking of the recent occupation of the National University in neighboring El Salvador, are less sanguine; one student leader predicted an intervention within six months. The USAC Governing Body has sent appeals to the human rights commissions of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in an attempt to forestall such a step. It is also appealing to all colleagues, and to all those concerned with academic freedom, around the world. □

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Jean Bloch-Michel

A Letter from Paris
The Communists & Racism

I have written in *Dissent* [in the Summer 1980 issue] about activities of rightist groups in France that are openly racist although they now call that age-old hatred by new and discreet names. They've surely had some success with the dissemination of their doctrine; after all, in all countries, or in most, a racist instinct needs merely to be aroused. The right has always flattered that instinct, while the left has fought it, although it has sometimes unwittingly contributed to it. But things are changing. Now a party that claims to be of the left has mounted a campaign that encourages and instigates racist reactions—while affirming that nothing could be further from this party than racism. This is the French Communist party.

So grave an accusation, of course, can't be made without backing it up with hard facts. I shall do so; for my documentation, I am borrowing some essential material from *Droit de vivre*, the monthly publication of the LICRA (Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme), and I shall now begin with a brief chronological account of recent actions the CP has instigated, mainly in the suburbs of Paris. (And I believe that the topic of my letter—though written two weeks before the first round of our presidential elections—will have lost none of its interest by the time you read it in print.)

I shall now speak more precisely of several communities on the outskirts of Paris—places unknown or ignored by most Parisians. Though long part of the Paris megapolis, they still retain their sonorous pastoral names, which jibe poorly with these asphalt landscapes and their components, modestly called "*grand ensembles*"—huge barracks amidst wastelands, in which our urban, industrial civilization cultivates its lumpenproletariat like others do mushrooms. . . . Such suburban townships indeed play a role in these events.

• On October 28, 1980, the Communist mayor of Aulney-sous-bois demanded publicly that a stop be put to all immigration. Two other Communist municipalities in the Paris suburbs—Nanterre and Saint-Denis—then announced that they would refuse to assign public, low-rent housing to colored applicants, regardless of their origin and even if they were French citizens from overseas.

• On November 15, at a meeting in Bourget, the French Communist party's General Secretary Georges Marchais not only demanded a stop to immigration, but also censured the government for its poor enforcement of the Stoleru and the Bonnet laws (named for their authors). Earlier, these laws, which provide procedures for the expulsion and "voluntary" repatriation of aliens, had been sharply criticized and voted down in the National Assembly by the left, including the Communists.

• Meanwhile, the CP's activities developed further in this direction, and on December 24, Christmas Eve, an incident of such gravity occurred that the media brought it at once to the attention of the whole country. Several hundred Malian workers, who had been poorly housed in a neighboring community, were temporarily installed in an immigrants' hostel in Vitry-sur-Seine. The municipality that had been housing the Malians belonged to the majority party; that of Vitry was Communist. The morning after the Malians' arrival in Vitry, about 50 people, led by the mayor himself, ransacked the hostel; cut off the water, electricity, and telephone; destroyed the staircases with a bulldozer, and barred the entrances. The mayor's office then affirmed that the neighboring community had gotten rid of the Malians, who now were temporarily housed in Vitry. He then declared that the Malians so increased the number of immigrants in the community that it exceeded its "threshold of tolerance." Therefore, he added, a manifestation of their rejection by the community had been unavoidable. However well-founded the mayor's reasoning may have been, the procedures that were employed caused a scandal. Yet several days later, the District's deputy to the National Assembly and Georges Marchais himelf gave their support to the mayor and, in the name of the Party, approved of his actions.

• A week later, the Communist mayor of Bagnolet asked the police to expel all the residents of three hotels, which he declared on the spot unsanitary. Now these men and women—all were from Maghreb—were out in the street, without a chance of finding new lodgings.

Mitterand's Victory

• We were delighted to hear of the victory of François Mitterand, the Socialist candidate, now president of France. We expect to have in our next issue a report from Paris on the political implications of this event. — EDS.

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• On January 5, 1981, the townhall of Ivry decided to establish a *numerus clausus*, to limit the proportion of children from immigrant families who would be eligible to attend the community's publicly organized vacation camps. Their number was not to exceed 15 percent of the campers' total. Since it's common knowledge that immigrant families are always the poorest, and don't usually have the benefit of paid vacations, this measure worked simply to deprive the poorest of an important public, community social service.

• On February 7, the Communist mayor of Montigny-sur-Cormeilles, relying on a letter he pretended to have received from the mother of an Algerian family, brought the grave accusation of drug-dealing against a Moroccan family. The mayor now organized a demonstration below the windows of that Moroccan family, replete with shouts and placards, accusing them of this crime—although the police, it turned out, knew nothing about the matter. Again, there was quite a scandal. The Moroccan embassy protested. It turned out that the mother of the Algerian family, who supposedly had written the letter to the mayor, could neither read nor write—and that her son was a member of the Communist youth organization. Once again, Georges Marchais and the Party apparatus voiced their support for the mayor of Cormeilles. But then a new turn in the affair led the Communists to greater discretion: the son of "the informer" (who was part of the Communist youth) was arrested for shoplifting, and the police, while searching his room, found—2 kilos of hashish!

• On February 10, at an organized rally in the 13th District of Paris, Georges Marchais protested against the settling together, or "the regrouping of thousands of native Asians" in the District. These people, obviously, are refugees from the former Indochina. George Marchais has little reason to treat them with tact; for although many of them are French citizens, few will vote Communist. So Marchais spoke with anger and contempt of their neighborhood as the "Hongkong sur Seine."

• On February 11, the municipality of Montfermeil refused one of its employees the official apartment to which he was entitled, on the pretext that he was an Algerian. That same day, the Communist mayor of Dannemarie-les-Lys demanded, without consulting his municipal council, the closing of an immigrants' hostel, in order to convert it into apartments for young French couples. That hostel—it houses 426 unmarried workers, among whom 376 are of 10 different nationalities—belongs to a public organization, the Sonacotra. Sonacotra, of course, refused to vacate the hostel and reminded the public that its construction made it possible to tear down a shantytown. This time, to its credit, the public rallied strongly to the cause of the immigrants. So the mayor back-tracked, and declared that he did not envisage the closing of the hostel, but its reorganization.

ALL THESE INCIDENTS were brought about in the months October-March 1981, at the very same time that the CP's General Secretary Georges Marchais was campaigning for the national presidential election. The links between these two sets of events are obvious.

True, the immigrant population is concentrated in the working-class suburbs of Paris, and many of their municipalities are governed by Communists. Working-class suburbs, however, are not necessarily poor. Although they have a population of modest incomes, paying modest or low rents, these are also the communities in which large, medium-sized, and small industrial plants are located, and they do generously feed the municipal budgets. But none of this is a question of money, and no Communist mayor has spoken in this campaign of budgetary problems. Surely, the concentration of immigrants usually occurs in industrial or commercial areas, where jobs and affordable housing are available to them—not in "bourgeois" neighborhoods or townships.

But, without going more deeply into this problem, which has been widely studied and especially in the United States—this [voluntary] regrouping of immigrants by origin [in their own neighborhoods] seems very much to follow from a natural impulse: to stay together, until society's doors begin to open to them. So why has the 13th Arrondissement become the "Hongkong-sur-Seine"? Undoubtedly, for the same reason that 50 years ago the "*immigrés de l'interieur*" (from the country) flocked together in the same way and why, for example, the neighborhood around the Montparnasse railroad station was inhabited mostly by Bretons.

Until recently, before these sometimes difficult problems of different [racial and cultural] groups living together [in our country] became acute, the parties of the left endeavored to ameliorate and facilitate relations between such diverse groups and communities. The Communists, however, aware of the population's latent racism, have not always done so with prudence. Etienne Balibar, the Communist philosopher and student of Althusser, was expelled from the CP for recalling in an article in the *Nouvel Observateur* how long it had

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taken the Communists to decide to give aid to the Algerian population, and how difficult it had been for the Party to renounce its traditional policy of opposing all the Algerian parties that favored independence, because they were not Communist. Balibar especially recalled how, during the disastrous Socialist government of Guy Mollet and while the Socialist Robert Lacoste was governor general of Algeria, the Communists in the National Assembly had voted on several occasions to give the government full power to "settle" the Algerian problem.

But let us not dwell on these memories of past political events, and not keep count of the number of past incidents—such as, among others, the mobilization against the gypsies, and the refusal by a great city's municipal council to permit the creation of an Islamic cultural center. Yet, the question arises: Is the Communist party of France racist?

These recent incidents, as I said, all occurred during the national presidential election campaign—indeed, at a time when the CP is facing grave internal and external problems. Internally it is faced with an opposition—not threatening the Party's existence but risking grave injury—the opposition of those who reproach it for the break-up of the French Union of the Left. The expulsion of the historian Elleinstein and of others solved nothing. For in this opposition one must include all those who have a hard time accepting the invasion of Afghanistan and, on top of that, the approval for it that Georges Marchais has given to Moscow. Let's note in this context that all the union elections over the past months have registered a serious falloff for the Communist CGT, in favor of the major non-Communist union federations, the CFDT and the FO. And the party's cautious attitude on the Polish situation surely did not help.

So the CP has been well aware that, for all these reasons, a significant number of its nonactivist people would cast their votes, from the first round on, for Mitterrand. Since the Party cannot bend its line to bring back these voters, it must seek new allies elsewhere. So far, all through the campaign, the polls showed that the CP did not surpass the 16-18 percent level of the vote—a loss of 3-5 percent.

Therefore, all this is a matter of gaining votes. Since the Communists can no longer count on those among the intellectuals and on the fringe of the petty bourgeoisie who once were their staunch supporters, they are trying to gain votes among those workers who otherwise vote on the right, and there are many of them. This goal has led to the campaign against the immigrants and to the accusation of drug-dealing, in an effort to appeal to the least admirable impulses in that part of the population.

As to the matter of drugs, the demagoguery of the Communist campaign is most striking. The drug problem is not widely known in France. Yet, sensational press coverage has made it seem much more acute and threatening than it actually is; for the subject of drugs evokes fear. Yet, last year in France, 117 people died from drug overdoses, while alcohol killed 30,000 directly and 150,000 indirectly (in accidents of all kinds caused by alcohol abuse). The Communist party, however, had managed in the European parliamentary elections to present on its lists some large winegrowers of the Midi who are afraid of possible Spanish competition; so the CP will not take action against alcohol. The wine and the aperitif, after all, are sacred in France. The only politician who had the courage to fight against alcoholism while in office was Mendès-France, and this attitude contributed a lot to his defeat. One still remembers that.

Coming back to the issue of racism, let us note that the Communist campaign never took on an anti-Semitic coloring; that's not at all what it's about. It must be said: the Communist party is not racist. It uses racism to pick up votes here and there, and these methods are more despicable than dangerous. But then, the party is hardly worried about keeping to the truth.

AMONG THE CORRESPONDENCE between Albert Camus and Jean Grenier, which is to be published soon, I found a passage dated June 18, 1938 that I should like to quote in conclusion. Camus, who had belonged to the Communist party and was about to leave it, here explains himself to his teacher and friend:

> *Ma seule excuse, si j'en ai une, est que je ne peux me détacher de ceux parmi lesquels je suis né et que je ne pouvais abandonner. Ceux-là, le communisme en a injustement annexé la cause. Je comprends maintenant que, si j'ai un devoir, c'est de donner aux miens ce que j'ai de meilleur, je veux dire essayer de les défendre contre le mensonge.*

("My only excuse," Camus writes, "if I have one, is that I cannot separate myself from those among whom I was born and whom I could not forsake. Communism has unjustly appropriated their cause. I understand now that if I have one obligation, it is to give to my people the best I have—to try to defend them against faleshood.")

Translated by ELFIN VOGEL □

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Irving Howe

Looking into El Salvador

A new battle of political statements has begun—this time about El Salvador. Most of those I've seen appear to be little more than rewritings of statements produced in the '60s about Vietnam, and this doesn't encourage one to rush in with a signature. So here are a few remarks based on a reading of whatever I could find that might help people on the democratic left orient themselves to the conflict in El Salvador. My knowledge of that country is probably no greater or smaller than that of most people who have recently been signing statements; but one thing I have learned: *it is a country with a complicated and tragic political-social history* and any effort to fit it into one of the categories now in fashion—whether Marxist or hard-line anti-Communist or even liberal—won't get us far.

I have no clear "position" to offer on the struggle in El Salvador, only some near-certainties, probabilities, and questions. If that doesn't make for an effective political position, I regret it; but perhaps it is more important to try to reach the truth.

Near-Certainties

A POOR COUNTRY of four and a half million people pressed into a small area, suffering from both overpopulation and insufficiency of usable land, El Salvador has long been brutalized by its dominant military caste. There seems to be a fairly regular alternation between open authoritarian rule by the military and efforts to erect a civilian facade. If the latter is merely set up for the convenience of the military, it withers; if it shows some signs of independence, the military destroys it. Behind the military looms a small group of wealthy landowners who in recent years have "diversified" through investment in a small but growing industrial sector; behind both the military caste and the landowning oligarchy (no more than a handful of families) stands the power of the United States.

El Salvador has not known, in any precise sense, a totalitarian regime, since the military-oligarchical rulers have not troubled themselves, or commanded the sophistication, to develop ideological justifications. But when the military has ruled openly as it has several times over the past few decades, it has often been quite as cruel in suppressing dissidents as have the classical totalitarian regimes. The distinction made by Mrs. Kirkpatrick, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes can have a certain analytic validity, but at least with regard to Central America it doesn't necessarily suggest much of a difference with regard to violence, terror, suppression.

- Now and again there have been elections in El Salvador, sometimes because the military recognizes its own political ineptitude, sometimes because it must yield a little to popular demands. Whenever free or somewhat free elections were held, these were won by oppositional forces—and then (twice in recent years) simply *stolen* by the military. This is a literal statement, not a metaphor.

In 1972 a ticket headed by José Napoléon Duarte, leader of the Christian Democrats, and Guillermo Ungo, leader of the Social Democrats, clearly won the election; but the military ignored the results of the voting and declared its own candidate, a Colonel Molina, the victor. Duarte then spent eight years in exile.

Molina's term expired in 1977 and then, in another stolen election, a General Romero was declared the president. The rule of Romero is universally agreed to have been one of sustained terror. In October 1979 he was ousted by a coup of "progressive" military officers (some of whom had come to believe that to rule without any popular legitimacy was to risk the unhappy fate of Somoza in Nicaragua). These rebellious officers set up a junta of five, consisting of two military men, two representatives of the "moderate" urban middle class, and the Social Democrat Ungo. The junta

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promised reforms and some of its members evidently wanted to enact them, but violent resistance from uncontrolled right-wing elements within the military and more or less passive sabotage from the country's tiny bourgeoisie thwarted these reforms. There were then resignations, shifts, maneuvers, including the resignation of the first junta in early 1980, the creation of a new one with Christian Democratic participation (especially Duarte), a split among the Christian Democrats with a segment of the party going over to the opposition, Duarte becoming president of the junta in December 1980, Ungo becoming the formal political leader of the opposition in exile, and so forth.

• The central problem of El Salvador remains the ability of the military—not so much (or mainly) the army, but the national police (Guardia Nacional) and the "Treasury Police"—to act outside anything resembling law. These military and paramilitary institutions are intent upon crushing every nodule of effective power apart from themselves and the landed oligarchy. Land reform, perhaps; but autonomous peasant organizations never—that seems to be their dominant outlook.

There is, in addition to these military institutions, an interesting and rather sinister organization called ORDEN (recently "dissolved" but actually still in existence), which combines paramilitary forces with a peasant network that, in exchange for modest privileges, intimidates less privileged groups in the countryside (a large contingent of landless agricultural laborers employed on coffee and cotton plantations). It might be recalled that the authoritarian ruler in South Vietnam, Diem, had also hoped to create some such organization, but failed. In El Salvador ORDEN has been effective.

Kill, Kill

• What is "winning" [in El Salvador]? Is it supporting a military junta that kills the opposition but by its repressive nature produces more opposition that becomes necessary to kill? If need be, yes. . . .

— WILLIAM SAFIRE, *New York Times, Feb. 26, 1981*□

When the Reagan-Haig people, and their intellectual accomplices, talk about opposing "terrorism," they turn out to be strangely mute about the right-wing murder squads that in 1980 killed most of the 10,000 people who were political victims in El Salvador. (Ten thousand out of four and a half million: a terrifying proportion!) The left-wing guerrillas have also used such methods but, perhaps because weaker, they have not been as effective as the right-wing squads. Both the former Archbishop Oscar Romero, himself assassinated in March 1980 by right-wing thugs, and the former U.S. Ambassador Robert White, a conscientious diplomat, have testified to these facts.

Probabilities

THE DUARTE REGIME, dependent on, even as it has been trying to gain some independence from, the military, has undertaken a land reform program. Two of the three phases of the agrarian reform have reportedly been carried out—Phase One and Phase Three. The very large plantations have been transformed into cooperatives (Phase One), and sharecroppers and renters been made owners of their land (Phase Three). What has not been done (Phase Two) is the taking over of "medium-sized" plantations, on which most of the coffee is grown. How authentic, how deep-going these reforms have in fact been, it is impossible for an outsider to judge.

There is, nevertheless, something comic in the spectacle of American intellectuals debating problems of land reform in El Salvador, a country most of us would have had trouble locating precisely on the map until a few months ago. And I don't want to cast myself in this comedy. I don't know how good or bad, authentic or false have been the land reforms of Duarte, and I greatly doubt that many of those who have recently rushed in to praise or deprecate these reforms know either. Nor is this crucial for trying to understand the situation in El Salvador. After all, even if the land reforms don't go deeply enough, they could be improved. And the inadequacy of such reforms isn't in itself a sufficient ground for creating or supporting a guerrilla movement.

Far more decisive is the fact—and here we can learn something from Vietnam—that a land reform program imposed by a government of dubious political-moral authority is likely to prove

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ineffectual. *Social reform by authoritarian governments constitute a kind of contradiction in terms.* Land reform would/could make a major difference only if it were accompanied by physical security for political dissidents and recalcitrant peasants were able to create their own free and autonomous institutions (to use the Polish term: Solidarity). This would require, first and foremost, breaking the power of the extralegal and and "legal" military terror squads and establishing a significant measure of social-political freedom. *What matters, crucially, is the right to participate freely in the political process, the right peacefully to defend and advance reforms without having to fear for one's life, since upon this right insurgent and oppressed groups can build future strength.* Until the Duarte government is able or willing to provide this, its land reforms may be regarded with a great deal of skepticism.

- There are reports that Duarte, said personally not to be a bad fellow, has strengthened his position somewhat vis à vis the military. But meanwhile, terrorism continues. Clearly he does not yet have the power or the will to curb the right-wing terror squads—first, because these find their nest within the military, and second, because the Reagan policy of overwhelming El Salvador with military equipment (which Duarte himself says isn't needed) has the obvious effect of increasing the self-confidence of the military and sustaining its Haigish delusion of gaining a "total victory." And "total victory" would of course annul incentives to reform.

Duarte, for example, recently declared that political exiles like the Social Democrat Ungo are free to return to El Salvador—but added sheepishly he could not guarantee their safety if they came back. Which neatly symbolizes the condition of the country!

Portions of the military, learning a little from the fate of Somoza, have apparently begun to realize that their eventual survival depends on having some sort of social policy; but the one reform the military is unwilling to accept is the one most needed—its submission to civilian authority. Recognizing that tying its fate to that of the landowning oligarchy, its former senior partner, might be disastrous, the military now seeks to play a more independent role. This inclines a small group of officers to more progressive measures, and a larger group to indiscriminate terrorism. Lacking a base in more than those limited segments of the urban middle class that support the Christian Democrats, Duarte cannot contain the military nominally under his rule.

- The guerrilla opposition—since April 1980 part of the oppositional Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) headed by Ungo—seems not as strong in El Salvador as the Sandinistas were in Nicaragua before the overthrow of Somoza. The Sandinistas had gained the support of important segments of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and middle classes, which could no longer tolerate Somoza's "old-style" corruption. But in El Salvador whatever there is of a bourgeoisie supports Duarte and there seems to be some—no one seems able to say how much—support for his regime in the countryside. The guerrilla movement in El Salvador, in short, doesn't seem to represent the revulsion of a virtually unified nation against an intolerable despot, as was the case in Nicaragua. (The recent failure of the guerrilla "final offensive" suggests the limits of its strength.) However, it seems reasonable to expect that if the Reagan government keeps sending military hardware to El Salvador's military, thereby encouraging notions of "total victory," this will drive many as-yet-uncommitted people into the hands of the opposition. (Circulation in El Salvador of the statement put out by Midge Decter's "Committee for the Free World" might also have that effect.)

Questions

WHAT IS THE POLITICAL CHARACTER of the guerrilla movement? We are told it contains many tendencies and organizations, but this does not yet answer Lenin's famous question: *who/whom*? Which group is the controlling force? By all accounts the Social Democrat Ungo who heads the FDR is a sympathetic figure with whom people like ourselves can sympathize; he cares about democratic values, he does not want to see a left-authoritarian dictatorship in El Salvador. But how strong is Ungo likely to be vis à vis the Castroite, Communist, Marxist-Leninist tendencies within the guerrilla movement? How strong, for that matter, can any Social Democratic group be in a country such as El Salvador, wretchedly poor, misruled for generations, without a sustained democratic experience?

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I do not pretend to be able to answer these questions. But there seems sufficient ground for skepticism and even pessimism.

Speaking a few months ago at a conference in the U.S., Ungo acknowledged—he is an honest man—that if the guerrillas won he could not be sure that he and his friends would be strong enough to prevent the imposition of a "left" dictatorship. He still favored the guerrillas, he said, since he had given up hope completely that Duarte's policy could bring good results.

• Tragically, Duarte and Ungo, who from a distance would seem to be natural allies, have split and become bitter enemies. Each appears to have attached himself to a force he cannot control and that may, in the end, destroy him.

Conclusions

THE REAGAN POLICY is a disaster. It encourages ultimatistic tendencies among El Salvador's right and thereby lessens whatever small chance there may be that Duarte will establish control over it. There have been efforts both by the European Christian Democrats and the Socialist International to propose a truce in El Salvador, to be followed by elections and a new civilian government. These efforts, which have at best a small chance of succeeding, have met with stiff resistance from the Reagan government and been rejected by the Duarte regime. Whatever else, we can be quite certain that the results of the Reagan policy will be to sharpen the polarization of forces within El Salvador—and thereby, previous experience suggests, eventually to strengthen the authoritarian left.

• Is there any hope? A slight one would be to have a cease-fire, a political truce, and then an election supervised by, say, some Latin-American agency drawn from neighboring countries that are more or less democratic: Costa Rica, Venezuela, Mexico. There would have to be a reconciliation, even if only in part, of the groups that can be described as the democratic center—the Socialist and Christian Democratic internationals ought to work toward that end.

Even this slim hope, it must be acknowledged, has major built-in difficulties. An election would be almost meaningless unless ways were found for controlling the military and preventing it from intimidating voters and falsifying the results. How, after all, can you hold a free election in a country where candidates are likely to be murdered?

• The crisis in El Salvador having been allowed to fester, it may be that there is no longer a significant possibility of a solution that would encourage a degree of liberal democracy and social reform. That is a tragic possibility, but it must be faced.

Apologists for both sides in El Salvador argue that "their" form of authoritarianism is better than the other. Perhaps. A "moderately repressive" authoritarian dictatorship is said to be less dangerous for the world than a Communist regime; a left authoritarian government might be more responsive to the material needs of the people. Both arguments smell bad, and in fairly similar ways. The "moderate" authoritarianism that Ms. Kirkpatrick favors is likely to drive increasing numbers of its subjects to left-wing guerrilla movements. The claim that the left authoritarian governments at least look after the material needs of their people seems decidedly shaky after the mass exodus of more than 100,000 Cubans (unless one supposes they left because they were ideological followers of Milton Friedman . . .).

• A desperate situation. The one thing liberals and socialists can do is to be honest, perhaps because there are times when we cannot be much else. Let us not be swept away by scare slogans from the right or fuzzy rhetoric from the left. We are for freedom everywhere: the people of El Salvador need it *at least* as much as the people of the U.S. That we should oppose the Reagan policies is obvious, but that there is any "side" or "force" in El Salvador we ought to support seems to me very much in question. Such are my impressions and conclusions from doing a bit of homework. I have checked these notes with scholars whose authority seems unquestionable. No doubt, there are still errors in what I have written. But in recent years I've become increasingly impatient with the widespread notion that you have to be an "expert" to discuss this or the other political problem. I write here deliberately as one who is not an expert on El Salvador and invite the comments of others, expert or not, who may agree or disagree. □

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Shall We Call a General Strike?

Transcript of a Historic Meeting of Solidarity

Introduction

The document below is a somewhat abridged translation of a report on the meeting of Solidarity's highest body, the National Coordinating Committee (KKP), which took place in the western Polish town of Bydgoszcz this year on March 23-24. The report (in itself a summary rather than a verbatim account) appeared in no. 8 of the Union's own Press Agency bulletin, published in Warsaw (another informational bulletin comes out in Gdansk). Before I describe the circumstances under which the meeting took place, as well as its immediate consequences and long-range implications, a brief historical introduction is in order.

For more than half a year after the conclusion of the "Gdansk Agreement" of August 31, 1980, Poland was in the grip of successive confrontations between the authorities on the one hand, and the mushrooming social organizations—above all, Solidarity—on the other. Whether or not there were those within the highest party echelons who genuinely desired to reach an accommodation with the increasingly restive and self-assertive Polish society, their voices clearly did not prevail. "All our achievements," said Solidarity Chairman Lech Walesa some time in March (I quote from memory), "were attained only by the threat and use of force, pressure, and strikes." After grudgingly allowing the emergence of an independent trade union, the government proceeded to hamper and sabotage its activities, while attempting to breathe some life into the discredited official trade union structure. The first conflict with Solidarity occurred in October, when the authorities refused to let the Union be legally registered unless its statutes (as distinguished from the preamble) incorporated a formal recognition of the "leading role" of the CP. The registration took place barely a day before the country was to be paralyzed by a general strike. A few weeks later Solidarity again threatened a general walkout, unless a printer accused of the unlawful dissemination of secret police instructions on how to deal with the regime's "political opponents" was released from custody. Again the authorities relented only after several thousand workers laid down their tools, with hundreds of thousands ready to follow.

A few weeks later came the protracted conflict over a five-day work week, which could easily have been resolved had not the government dug in its heels, and at first refused to negotiate this matter with the trade unions. The same is true for other issues raised by Solidarity—the demand that particularly odious police and administrative officials be sacked; that a hospital heretofore used exclusively by the elite be put at the disposal of the general public; that Poland's nearly 3 million private farmers be allowed to form their own trade union (Rural Solidarity); that Solidarity be given access (as stipulated by the Gdansk Agreement) to the public media; that a new liberalized censorship law come into force (to be enacted by November 1980 but still nonexistent). In almost every case the authorities eventually backed down, avoiding yet another explosion. But the price was heavy: the gradual erosion of the government's authority, disarray within the Party ranks, and above all the public's growing conviction that the regime was bent on destroying the Union, that it was merely playing for time, and that no reasonable solution to the crisis was in sight.

Now, what was remarkable about this six-month period was that despite accumulating bitterness, the confrontations were not accompanied by violence. True, there were isolated cases of police brutality, occasional beatings, threats, and detainments; but by and large no bloodshed. A reputedly volatile people, subjected to nerve-racking provocations and economic privations, was maintaining an extraordinary sense of discipline, restraint, and even good humor. ("Why did God invent the orgasm?" runs a current Warsaw joke. "Answer: so that the Poles would know when to stop.") But could it last?

The question was put to a severe test during the week of March 16-23. On Monday, March 16, a group of farmers, representing the nascent Rural Solidarity and the dissident Agricultural Circles (a peasant self-help organization that the authorities tried to bolster in an attempt to undermine the

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growing popularity of the farmers' trade union), gathered in front of the Bydgoszcz People's Council office in order to present their case to the authorities. Finding the gates locked, they repaired to the headquarters of the local United Peasant party (a bogus political organization ostensibly representing the peasants) and then proceeded to occupy it, declaring that the sit-in would continue until their demands were properly dealt with. On the following day the farmers managed to hold some talks with the vice-chairman of the People's Council, but these were soon broken off on the grounds that the local official had no authority to deal with demands pertaining to the country as a whole. On March 18, the farmers were joined by several Solidarity representatives; together, they composed a detailed statement to be presented at the next morning's session of the People's Council. The latter promised to discuss it with Solidarity.

On March 19, disaster struck. Solidarity members and a few farmers attended the meeting; for a while it seemed as if the promised discussions were about to begin. At one point, however—before the complainants had a chance to speak—the meeting was adjourned and a number of Council members, headed by their chairman and vice-chairman, left the room. A few hours later, the vice-chairman returned and asked that the other Council members join him and his colleagues for "consultations." Suspecting a subterfuge, the farmers and the Solidarity members insisted that at least some of the Council members stay behind. Five did. The talks went on, in an atmosphere described by all subsequent reports (by the official media as well as by those present) as "amicable" and "business-like." Suddenly the doors opened and about 200 policemen entered the room, with the major in charge demanding that the meeting be terminated and its participants disperse. When the latter (including the People's Council officials) refused, the police rushed in, dragging men and women by their hair, throwing them out of the building, to the accompaniment of "bloodcurdling cries," punchings, and beatings. Outside the building, three Solidarity officials, including the chairman of the Bydgoszcz chapter, Jan Rulewski, were set upon by several "civilians" (no doubt secret police) who beat them mercilessly. The three, gasping and covered with blood, were found by their colleagues and taken to the nearest hospital, where they were to remain for a long time.

The reaction to this unprecedented savagery was massive and instantaneous. Throughout the country, as well as in Bydgoszcz itself, thousands of workers laid down their tools, demanding that a general strike be declared immediately. The atmosphere was fraught with tension: only two days earlier, the Warsaw Pact troops had launched extensive maneuvers in Poland, and Soviet troops were massing along the country's borders. It was clear to some of the Solidarity leaders, including its Chairman Lech Walesa, who rushed to the scene, that the incident was a provocation staged not so much by the Party leadership (Kania was out of Poland) as by diehard elements eager to precipitate a confrontation. (Walesa in an address to a huge crowd at the Bydgoszcz Solidarity building: "We are with you. Serious violations have occurred. Someone has long claws—we'll make sure to clip them. Not all the people on top are bad—some of them we would trust. But what happened here was an attack on the entire Union. We shall respond decisively. We're not shaking in our boots. We shall act calmly, thoughtfully, and without fear.")

Although several investigation committees appointed by the Warsaw authorities came to Bydgoszcz, and although Deputy Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski—long-time editor of the weekly *Polityka*, who had repeatedly gone on record in favor of a "genuine partnership" with Solidarity—immediately launched a series of talks with Walesa, passions ran high. To make matters worse, a hastily convened meeting of the Politburo ended with a resolution in effect whitewashing the police, and accusing Solidarity of "spreading unrest and distrust." A statement by Cardinal Wyszynski (whose representative was present at the People's Council deliberations) condemned the police, supported the workers and farmers, yet urged them to remain calm. But the pressure for a decisive "blow" from all over the country kept steadily mounting.

It was against the background of these tumultuous events that the meeting of the KKP, summarized below, took place. The question before its members was not *whether* to strike, but how, for how long, and when. As the proceedings of the meeting dramatically illustrate, some of the members were in no mood for compromise. Others, especially the "experts" attached to Solidarity (see the Glossary), recommended caution. Some thought, only a general strike can finally bring the government to its knees. Others felt that precipitous action might end in a catastrophe.

The report—as I hope the reader will agree—is full of fascinating revelations to anyone who

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wants to understand Poland's "bloodless revolution." Note, for instance, Walesa's personal tactics (sometimes bordering on blackmail), and his powerful charisma. Note the suspicious attitude, on the part of some of the KKP members, toward the experts, possibly indicating a latent mistrust of "intellectuals" in general. Then there are the interminable wranglings about the difference between a "universal" and a "general" strike (both, of course, amount to the same thing), and the curious mix of political astuteness and naiveté. It also is surely remarkable that for all the chaos and dissension, the meeting adhered strictly to democratic procedures—all the more remarkable in a country with no experience whatever in democracy.

The immediate outcome was a victory for Walesa and his supporters: first a four-hour warning strike, then a general walkout unless the government entered into serious discussions with Solidarity. The warning strike, which took place on March 27, was singularly successful. For four hours everything came to a standstill. On March 30, a day before the general strike was to begin, Rakowski and Walesa (and their respective teams) reached an understanding, and the latter called off the strike, subject to approval by the KKP. The agreement contained the government's apology for the Bydgoszcz incident and a promise that the culprits would be punished, as well as assurances that all the outstanding issues between Solidarity and the authorities, including that of Rural Solidarity, would be speedily resolved.

The agreement, as it turned out, was not to the liking of all members of the KKP. However, following yet another stormy meeting on March 31, Walesa's decision carried the day; to do otherwise would have clearly undermined his personal authority. Solidarity's chairman was subjected to bitter criticism for his "arbitrariness," for acquiescing to formulations not backed by legal and institutional guarantees, for leaving certain matters (such as the question of censorship and access to mass media) either vague or altogether unresolved. A long speech by Karol Modzelewski, then Solidarity's press spokesman, captured the ambivalent mood of the occasion. While urging his comrades to approve the agreement as the best possible under the circumstances, Modzelewski maintained that the events of the past week revealed some fundamental flaws in the Union's *modus operandi*:

> The important thing to remember is that the Union, which has had a leader with so much authority and which could not, because of its weak organizational structure, work out a rigorous decision-making mechanism, has created a king that rules over it. Around the king is a court, and then there is a parliament. And since the king is no mere dummy, the power resides in his court, rather than in the parliament. It is a suicidal arrangement for the Union, but apparently some people think that one must not wash one's dirty linen in public, and that we must pass over this matter in silence.

Having said this, Modzelewski resigned as press spokesman, and several other resignations followed.

So much then for the events immediately preceding and following the Bydgoszcz incident. What about the long-range consequences? Seen from the perspective of two months later, Bidgoszcz appears to me as the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. The course of Poland's history might well have taken a drastically different turn if, say, the Union had decided to call a general strike, thus forcing the hand not only of the Party hardliners but also of their more liberal colleagues—and possibly even of the Soviet Union, anxious to put an end to all the Solidarity "nonsense," while reluctant to resort to outright military force. Since the Union demonstrated its immense potential strength as well as flexibility, above all, its readiness to come to terms with the authorities, it succeeded in strengthening the position of the Party "reformers" (especially those in the rank and file).

The warning strike and the threat of a general strike amounted to proof that the nation would no longer tolerate a policy of evasiveness and delays. It served notice that henceforth Solidarity must indeed be considered a full-fledged "partner" of the government, and that its collaboration must be sought in solving all the country's problems—from alcoholism to the implementation of far-reaching economic reforms, from preserving law and order to the running of schools, hospitals, newspapers, and trains. The strike forced the Party to declare itself in favor of democratic internal reforms, and to work out a series of elaborate mechanisms for local and national cooperation between various governmental institutions and the trade unions. "Rural Solidarity" was finally registered. Solidarity was soon provided with ample regular access to the public media. The harassment of political opponents noticeably declined. And the press, radio, and TV have acquired a new lease on life—so much so that the

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need for the various "uncensored" publications has substantially diminished.

As these lines are written, elections to various Solidarity chapters are in progress, and an all-national congress is due to convene by the end of August. The "court," then, is now likely to be transformed into a genuine "parliament." By mid-July (the month when this issue of *Dissent* reaches its readers), the Party's long-postponed "extraordinary congress" is to take place, and secret elections to various party bodies now also are underway. In short—provided that Solidarity goes on respecting the party's "leading role" in the country's political system, rather than precipitating its disintegration—there is hope that the long-desired "social contract" between the rulers and the society may at last be consummated.

Perhaps all this would have happened even had the Bydgoszcz incident never occurred. But it is more likely that the incident helped to break a dangerous impasse and served as a catalyst of changes apt to alter profoundly not only the face of Poland, but eventually of other Communist countries in Eastern Europe as well. Which is another reason why the report on Solidarity's meeting of March 23-24 may yet come to be seen as one of those historic documents reflecting the birth pangs of a new era.

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG □

Glossary

KKP (*Krajowa Komisja Porozumewawcza*) — Solidarity's National Coordinating Committee. Has about 50 members.

MKZ (*Miedzyzakladowy Komitet Zalozycielski*) —Interfactory Founding Committee.

MO (*Milicja Obywatelska*) — People's Militia (police).

MSW (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnetrznych*) — Ministry of Internal Affairs.

TARGOWICA — A town in Poland and the meeting place, in 1792, of a group of Polish noblemen, who then were enraged by the promulgation of a new national Constitution that deprived them of considerable power. They gathered in Targowica in order to appeal to Empress Catherine II of Russia for aid against the lawful government of their own country. This appeal led to a new Russian invasion of Poland, already partitioned in 1772, and to the subsequent partitions of 1793 and 1795. Since then the word "Targowica" has been synonymous with "traitors."

PSL (*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe*) — the Polish Peasant party, headed by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, which during the immediate post-World War II period attempted to cooperate with the CP, yet was liquidated in 1947.

RKS (*Robotniczy Komitet Strajkowy*) — Workers' Strike Committee.

SB (*Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa*) — Security Services.

SEIJM — Poland's parliament.

ANDRZEJ CELINSKI — until March 31, Secretary of the KKP; after his resignation, appointed head of the cabinet of the KKP's chairman (Walesa).

ZBIGNIEW BUJAK — chairman of the "Mazowsze," Solidarity's Warsaw chapter, one of the country's biggest.

BRONISLAW GEREMEK — a historian and one of Solidarity's experts; also the chairman of the Council of the Consultative Program Committee (the executive body) of Solidarity's Center for Social Research, founded after the signing of and in accordance with the Gdansk Agreement of August 31, 1980.

ANDRZEJ GWIAZDA — a vice-president of the KKP.

JACEK KURON — coauthor of the "Open Letter" (see Modzelewski, below), one of the founders of the KOR, and perhaps the most prominent and prodigious representative of its more radical wing. One of Solidarity's experts. (See *Dissent*, January 1, 1981.)

BOGDAN LIS — vice-chairman of the Gdansk Solidarity chapter.

TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI — distinguished lay Catholic, member of the Warsaw Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia, a long-time editor of the monthly *Wiez* (link); since August 1980 one of Solidarity's experts, and now editor of *Tygodnik Solidarnosc* (Solidarity Weekly), published since April '81.

KAROL MODZELEWSKI — a prominent political oppositionist, coauthor, with Jacek Kuron, of the 1965 "Open Letter to the Party," which called for the abolition of the "bureaucratic power elite" and the establishment of a genuine "workers' democracy." After several years in jail, Modzelewski dropped out of the political picture, to reemerge in the summer of 1980 as press spokesman for Solidarity. He resigned on March 31, but still remains the vice-chairman of Solidarity's Wroclaw branch.

JAN OLSZEWSKI — lawyer, long-time political activist, and now one of Solidarity's experts.

WLADYSLAW SILA-NOWICKI — distinguished lawyer, adviser to Solidarity. □

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Transcript of a Meeting of the KKP,
Solidarity's National Coordinating Committee

First Session —
the Evening of March 23, 1981

Gorzow: Proposes general strike to begin on 3/24. Then gives a statement protesting the action of the MO and SB in Bydgoszcz, supporting the individual farmers, and demanding that the negotiations with the government, which are to commence on Sunday, be given wide publicity. He adds that it is imperative also to draw up a complete list of the Union's demands, and to insist that they be implemented immediately. If the result of the discussions with the government are positive, Walesa should call off the strike on television.

Torun: The position of our joint committee representing Solidarity, and Rural Solidarity, students, and cab-drivers is the following: if by 8 P.M. on Wednesday, 3/25, the Bydgoszcz discussions have not yet begun, to call a general strike for Thursday, 3/26. The view of the Torun enterprises represented in the joint committee is that it wasn't Solidarity that desired a confrontation, and that a compromise is therefore unacceptable.

Bydgoszcz (Gotowski): Shares the view of the Torun representative. Discussions about the Bydgoszcz incident can only take place in Bydgoszcz.

Walesa: Moves that a four-hour warning strike be announced for Friday 3/27, and a general strike for Monday, 3/30. One must give the government a chance to think the matter over.

Stalowa Wola (Krupka): Proposes that the Union's position be clearly formulated. One must avoid creating a sense of fear in the adversary, for it may prompt an aggressive reaction. We must state firmly that the Union is not attacking, but defending itself. If the [military] maneuvers continue, if the MSW and the MO are no longer under the government's control, then the strike is the Union's form of self-defense.

Czestochowa (Wieczorek): Reads the resolution of the RKS, which includes among other points the punishment of those responsible for the Bydgoszcz events, a balance sheet of the various agreements [with the government] reached heretofore, and a proposal that the meeting not be terminated until an agreement is concluded. He is for a general strike, the date to be determined later.

Legnica (also representing *Glogow* and *Lublin*): Is in favor of a general strike on 3/27, and against any negotiations with the government until it specifically requests them. Negotiations should be carried on TV.

Lodz: Proposes general strike, without warning strike, on 3/27. Demands that agreement must include punishment of those responsible for the Bydgoszcz events, registration of Rural Solidarity, creation of a Sejm committee monitoring the activities of the MSW and MO.

Radom (Sobieraj): Is in favor of a general strike on 3/26. He reminds those present that the [government] people responsible for the events of 1970 and 1976 are still in the government apparatus.

Slupsk: A general strike should be preceded by a warning strike. This will demonstrate that the Union is strong and in control of the situation.

Malopolska (Cyran): Proposes warning strike on 3/27, then a general strike on 3/31, Tuesday, for on Monday the problem of

The speakers are identified by the towns they represent (such as Gorzow, Torun, Bydgoszcz), and in some cases also or only by their last names.

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communication [with Solidarity chapters] is more difficult.

Szczecin: Supports the last two speakers. Proposes that the Friday strike last four hours. The general strike should last until it is proved successful, that is, until all the demands are fulfilled.

Tycha: Doubts whether all members of the KKP have managed to get in touch with their regional organizations. Proposes a warning strike on Friday, and consultations with the local groups, followed by a meeting of the KKP on Monday that would take a decision on the strike.

Poznan (Dymarski): Asks that everyone speak in his or her name only. In Poznan, for instance, a general meeting of delegates from factory committees had passed a resolution for a general strike, without a warning strike, to begin on 2/27.

Sieradz: Proposes a warning strike for Friday 3/27, and a general strike starting on Monday, with four regions striking at one time, to be replaced by the same number of regions every two days.

Rzeszow (Kopaczewski): Is in favor of a general strike without a warning strike first, the date to be determined by the KKP.

Olsztyn (Lechowski): Supports the KKP version—that is, a warning strike on Friday to be followed by a general strike on Tuesday.

Bytom (Cierniewski): Suggests the presentation of an ultimatum to the government during the discussions on Wednesday, as a response to the lack of guarantees for the safety of the Union. The ultimatum is to consist of (a) matters to be settled immediately and (b) those subject to negotiation. If the ultimatum fails, a six-hour strike should be set for Thursday 3/26, with a general strike the following day.

Zielona Gora (Niezgoda): Says it would be best to call a general strike for Friday, for people would only be exhausted from a warning strike. After the general strike is announced, it should continue until all demands are met. The preliminary condition for discussions must be an assurance from the government that it retains full control over the activities of the MO and MSW.

Wroclaw (Przydzial): A general strike should begin no later than 3/27. The situation is so tense it would be better not to leave the factories once the strike is in effect.

Lis: Proposes a general strike on 3/27. It is the only solution, for what has happened in Bydgoszcz demonstrates that the government is not interested in talking with Solidarity. Demands regarding legality and the political prisoners must not be subjects to negotiations, but conditions for starting the talks.

[More members speak in favor or against the various proposals. . . .]

Walbrzych (Szulc): Suggest that the conditions set by the strike should include the immediate termination of criminal proceedings against Kuron and Michnik, and complete guarantees for Solidarity's access to the public media.

Bujak: Is of the opinion that a general strike should be proclaimed after a wide discussion about the date, and after all arguments for or against the proposed dates are considered. . . . The demands should include annullment of the charges against oppositional activities in the years 1976-80.

Grudziadz: The strike should be announced as soon as possible; our society is at the end of its tether, it must not be kept waiting.

Slupsk: If the government declares a state of emergency, a general strike must begin immediately.

Stalowa Wola (Krupka): In his region people can't wait for the go-ahead signal.

Bujak: Moves that the experts be asked for their opinions on when the strike should begin.

A Voice from the Hall: Says that on this matter only those who participate in the strikes, and not the experts, should speak.

Prof. Geremek: Observes it would be contrary to the functions of the experts if they were asked to give their opinions only on the date of the strike, rather than also the manner

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in which the Union's problems should be resolved.

Walesa: Notes that this is what experts are for—first to explain what is in fact the difference between a general strike and a universal [*powszechny*] strike. He asks whether everyone is fully aware that a general strike means that everything comes to a standstill—which after all is impossible.

Szczecin (Jurczyk): Urges that thorough consideration be given to the proposals before any decision is taken. Cannot conceive of a strike that causes everything to come to a standstill—when there is no electricity, bread, or medication.

Sila-Nowicki: Reminds those present that until now all of the Union's decisions had been reached only after the experts had given their opinions. If Mazowiecki, Geremek, Olszewski, and he are denied the opportunity to elucidate their views, he will walk out.

A Voice from the Hall: The KKP members, when referring to a general strike, had a universal strike in mind; no one here can imagine a strike that includes absolutely all factories, community services, and the like.

Modzelewski: Moves formally to open the discussion and to ask the experts for their opinions. He appeals to his colleagues to have confidence in themselves, and to take decisions in keeping with their own convictions; the experts must not be reproached for trying to convince the KKP members to follow their advice, for this is their role.

Zielona Gora (Niezgoda): He has always tried to put a brake on excessively radical moods. In his region there have been some cases where attempts were made to settle things exclusively through strikes. However, the latest events in Bydgoszcz prove that the authorities do not want to talk and are bent on a confrontation, thus leaving Solidarity with no choice. He is convinced that if the Union does not defend itself, it will lose face with its rank-and-file, as well as with the government. He reminds everyone that the demands had been formulated a long time ago, and that now the time has come to see to it that the authorities respect them. . . . He repeats that the Union is not aiming for power, but wants the government to be just.

Glogow (Jarosz): The time for compromise has come to an end. Discussions with the government are a waste of time, and the Union will only harm itself by engaging in two or four-hour warning strikes.

Modzelewski: Appeals to everyone to consider all the parameters of the situation. He says that Solidarity had welcomed with hope the government of General Jaruzelski, in the belief that a strong government would be able to create necessary conditions for a conflictless resolution of all outstanding problems. The Bydgoszcz events constituted a provocation against the Jaruzelski government, which indeed let itself be provoked. This means that one can do little today against "Targowica," that the government is weak and cannot be considered by the Union as a serious partner. Hence it is necessary to call a strike, and a general one at that (never mind whether it is called "general" or "universal"). The term of the strike can be defined, but it should not be a warning one. In Modzelewski's opinion, the government needed the Sunday talks as a smoke screen, so that it could claim that the Union is pressing for a confrontation at a time when the discussions were still in process. In the future, if it becomes clear that discussions are merely a fiction, they should be immediately terminated. He thinks the discussions should commence on Friday, because an announcement of a universal strike may well bring about a change in the correlation of forces. Yet the talks with Jaruzelski should be broken off if they bear no results. He also believes that a warning strike would be useful to the Union, for if the talks end in a compromise, this will not have an adverse effect on the members' morale. . . . He calls attention to the fact that in addition to the government and Solidarity there is yet another force—the basic Party organizations in the factories—which may act to the Union's benefit. . . . The matter of private farmers should figure in the strike demands, but he doubts whether the same should hold for access to the mass media;

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while this is his area, he nevertheless believes that the list of demands should not be diluted.

Jastrzebie (Jedynak): What happened in Bydgoszcz can happen anywhere. You can't negotiate for safety guarantees—you must insist on them.

Koszalin: At this moment the strike is about the very existence of the Union. If the Union does not gain the guarantees for its existence, other matters (such as censorship) will be rendered unimportant. The Union must respond immediately, for it has no assurance as to what may happen between a warning and a general strike.

Mazowiecki: Says there are no experts in the areas now under discussion, and he is taking the floor simply as a member of Solidarity. The Union must respond to the Bydgoszcz events, but in keeping with its capabilities, and bearing in mind its responsibility to the nation. Therefore it is necessary to consider not only how to enter into a strike, but also how to withdraw from it without destroying all that has been achieved since last August. In assessing the situation in Poland, it must be remembered that there are differences of opinion on the other side, even though they may not be visible. This is why we must think with care when we consider taking positions that might hamper the actions of forces that are in favor of the renewal, perhaps not as decisively as Solidarity would desire, but that are trying to do something, nevertheless. Jaruzelski's government is the last chance for a peaceful solution of Poland's problems. And even though the chance is slim, and the government—as we have seen—is impotent in the face of provocations, we cannot afford to ignore that slim possibility. We must not escalate the Bydgoszcz provocation into a national provocation. In practice, this means that a universal strike must be limited in time.

Geremek: Asserts that in a situation where the Union has been subjected to a direct attack, it must respond with a blow. The fundamental problems at this time are the arbitrariness of the police authorites, the lack of guarantees for the farmers' self-government, and the danger to Solidarity's existence. Yet one must act in a way that will not precipitate the loss of what has been achieved. The decision now facing Solidarity is the most dramatic choice faced by the Union since August. To announce a universal strike without setting its time limit is a decision on a national insurrection. The Union must make it unmistakably clear that the present situation must change, that it is no longer possible to ignore the voice of Polish society. He proposes announcing a warning strike, and launching a wide propaganda campaign on the circumstances that had precipitated the present crisis. He supports Walesa's proposition: if a general strike is to be proclaimed, it must be accompanied by rigorous instructions about its conditions.

Gwiazda: Does not agree with the assertion that the Union is now confronted by its most dramatic decision. We have already taken many dramatic decisions that amounted to concessions and only encouraged the authorities. . . . He considers a warning strike absurd, that what should be discussed are the terms of a general strike—should it begin on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday? Submits a proposal that starting on Monday, the strike should be a "peripatetic" one, in successive regions, so that the possibility of turning it into a general national strike is not ruled out. Also says that the Union has the best experts, who know how to formulate and defend their views, so that any criticism of them is simply ridiculous.

Poznan (Dymarski): Is against a warning strike, which can be likened to a see-saw apt to irritate the authorities *and* the Union.

Olszewski: Says that the strength of Solidarity lies in the people's confidence in it. There were some fears here in Bydgoszcz about the behavior of the crowd of several thousand people that gathered in front of the union headquarters once it learned that the Warsaw talks had resulted in naught. But the crowd dispersed peacefully when it was asked to do so by Modzelewski. And we should not be afraid about the reaction of workers to our decisions, for they trust and will not abandon

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us. On the other hand, Solidarity bears responsibility for its members and it must keep that in mind. The government that Poland has is the only one possible for the country, and no one wants to replace it with a foreign one. The strike action must succeed, and this is why the Union must be clear about its objectives. The strike will not fail if the confrontation takes place not as Solidarity vs. the Government, but as the whole nation vs. "Targowica." The polarization process must embrace the whole society, and the Union's objectives must be fully accepted by the society. We must not proclaim a general strike until all other possibilities are exhausted. . . . A warning strike can suffice to demonstrate the fact that the Union is supported by the society as a whole. This is significant in the international realm as well. (The speaker goes on to propose the election of a strike committee that, rather than the whole KKP, should be in charge of the action, and it should not be located in Bydgoszcz, since the strike concerns the entire country.) It is necessary to define precisely what is meant by a general strike, so as not to provide any pretext for the intrusion of any forces outside the country. The communications network must work effectively, and we must not forget about food supplies, for otherwise the authorities will no doubt blame Solidarity for food shortages. Those branches of the economy that serve the population—not only the health services, food services, and the like, but also certain retail-trade and industry branches—must be exempt from the strike. He now speaks about our responsibility before history, and warns against adopting any hasty decisions. He moves that the discussions be resumed the following morning.

Walesa: Repeats his proposal: a warning strike on Friday, and a general strike as of Tuesday. He says this is his decision, made without the participation of experts.

Sila-Nowicki: Asserts that in his opinion the voices clamoring for an immediate general strike are irresponsible. The whole discussion reminds him of a meeting of an army high command after a victorious war, while in fact we are faced with the problem of how to win it. . . . If a strike is to take place, it must be organized with the greatest possible care. A general strike will place the government, in his opinion, in an untenable position. The government must not have a gun placed at its head. Solidarity is responsible for Poland, and not merely for its present generation.

Lodz (Slowik): The present situation is to some extent a result of Solidarity's timidity last October. Each act of submission and compromise has been used against us; now we are in a favorable situation, for the whole population is with us.

Modzelewski: Calls the attention of the KKP to the fact that one must assume responsibility not only for making but also for avoiding decisions. Perhaps after so many hours we cannot make any sensible decisions on the matter. . . . But to suspend the talks may provide the authorities with an opportunity to undertake certain actions against the Union, to which, for reasons of time, we shall not be able to respond. In addition, in some regions people are waiting impatiently for a decision. But we cannot adjourn without clearly stating our intentions. (He moves that the discussion be postponed until the following morning, at which time the duration and form of the strike will be decided. [The motion is defeated.])

Modzelewski: Returns to the subject of a general strike. It should take place neither on Thursday nor on Friday, for it must be a revolver that is aimed at the authorities, but not a shot. The threat of a general strike may put an end to the impasse. He proposes Monday, with the warning strike to take place immediately. The general strike should be canceled only if the warning strike is completely successful. If a general strike is announced for Friday, the government will make bogus concessions, will play for time, or might for that matter respond with machine-gun volleys. . . .

Bytom (Cierniewski): Opposes the concept of a "peripatetic" strike—it would result in chaos.

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Zielona Gora (Niezgoda): The KKP has deliberated late into the night on matters less weighty than this, and now some people say we ought to go to bed. It all reminds him of how the authorities liquidated the activists of the PSL [the prewar Polish Peasant party].

Kuron: Stresses that everyone agrees there should be a strike, but has different opinions as to the time and duration, and whether to precede it with a warning strike. He is of the opinion that a warning strike is necessary, if only to see whether, after the Politburo resolution, Party members will join the strike. . . .

[After some further discussions a vote is taken to create a strike committee. . . .

Then a vote is taken on Walesa's proposal: on a warning strike preceding a general strike. For: 23, against: 18.]

Szulc: Reminds everyone that Rozplochowski had proposed that a vote nevertheless be taken on whether to have talks at all.

Niezgoda: First the KKP should authorize the chairman [Walesa] to enter into the talks, and then questions his right to conduct further negotiations. Nevertheless, the motion is submitted to a vote, and is carried with 38 against 1, and 7 abstentions.

Rozplochocski: Moves that the Walesa proposal for a warning strike preceding a general strike be invalidated, since it automatically assumes that the talks with the government will continue, and that proposal was voted upon separately.

Celinski: Submits a motion that the Walesa proposal be voted upon again, but without any time limits.

[The vote: this time, 19 for, 22 against, and 1 abstention.]

Walesa: Thanks for everything. . . .

[A heated discussion begins, one person observes that the two vote counts don't match; Geremek pleads for an adjournment; the proposal is accepted, and at 3 A.M. the meeting is adjourned, to be resumed the following morning. All Solidarity chapters are to be informed about the results of the discussions.]

Second Session — the Morning of March 24, 1981

Celinski: Announces that he has been authorized by Walesa to say that he would participate in further discussions only if the KKP accepts his proposal for the strike.

Torun: Expresses his indignation—the chairman must not be allowed to behave in this manner. If the members of the KKP trust him, he must trust them.

Lis: Suggests that this matter be shelved temporarily. He thinks a warning strike is necessary.

Bujak: Says that in his view Walesa's behavior is dictated by his desire to avoid bloodshed. He does not want to assume responsibility for a decision that he believes will have tragic consequences.

Poznan (Dymarski): Asks whether Walesa would consent to a change in the duration of the warning strike.

Modzelewski: Is of the opinion that we must begin with a warning strike. The latest developments in Moscow and in the Polish Politburo indicate that the group that could aptly be branded as "Targowica" has gained ascendancy. A warning strike would show the Party, Poland, and Moscow that this group has no support, and that the command that Party members not take part in the strike has failed. This may tip the balance in favor of those in the leadership who are inclined to reach an agreement with Solidarity.

[Walesa's proposal is submitted to another vote, and is passed 35 to 2, with four abstentions: in case the Wednesday talks yield no results, to launch a warning strike on 3/27; if that in turn does not influence the government, a general strike is to start 3/31. Some members criticize Walesa's behavior, nevertheless. A discussion regarding the precise timing of the warning strike ensues, and it is finally decided that it would last four hours.]

Walesa: Asks to be forgiven for yesterday's incident. He appeals to Kuron, Modzelewski, and others not to force him to declare himself on certain matters, and not to engage

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in personal bickering. He says he has the support of the factory workers, that he could even come out against the whole KKP, but this isn't the time for settling accounts. It is now imperative to form a committee to direct the strike. It should be composed of competent people, in whom we have full confidence. [A 10-member group is elected, then increased to 11 members so as to avoid the possibility of an evenly split vote. In addition a watchdog committee that would function during the talks with the government is also elected. The discussion turns to the subject of the prerogatives of the strike committee.]

Slupsk: The committee must be vested exclusively with operational functions; important decisions must be left to the KKP.

Celinski: Thinks the committee should have the right to decide everything except calling off the strike. [He is supported by several others.]

Lublin (Sawicki): We are entering into a state of war and democratic procedures must therefore be suspended; the committee must be empowered to decide everything—we shall settle accounts later.

[A discussion regarding the venue of the committee—Gdansk, Bydgoszcz, or Warsaw. A decisive majority votes for Gdansk.]

Lis: Opens the discussion on the timing of the general strike; that timing, he says, will depend on its character: whether the strikers will take turns, or everyone will stay put.

[The MKZs are left to work out their own organizational details, but the latter of the two alternatives (to stay put) is passed.]

Sila-Nowicki: Is of the opinion that the newly elected National Strike Committee [KKS] should decide whether to continue the strike, or to terminate it.

[The matter is put to a vote. Modzelewski appears on TV and reads the resolution that includes the strike demands. In response to a question whether it is true that the Katowice MKZ passed a statement on the necessity to choose between membership in the Party and Solidarity, and organized a mass meeting to boot, *Rozplochowski* replies that it is the Party that is trying to convince its members to leave Solidarity, and that he was not in Katowice when the MKZ was deliberating this matter; hence he cannot reply to this question.]

Voices: If this resolution has indeed been passed, it should be immediately annulled, for it is in contradiction with the Union's statutes.

[Two members leave the hall to call Katowice and clear up this matter. They return later and inform the KKP that the alleged statement turned out to be a provocation and that Polish Television must be informed about it. There were no mass meetings in Katowice.]

Kuron: Apologizes for taking the floor at this important moment and asks Walesa to explain what he had in mind about being forced to be explicit on matters pertaining to him [Kuron] and Modzelewski. He says he has nothing to hide.

Walesa: Emphasizes that he is not saying anything against the KOR group, that he is very much obligated to KOR and to Kuron personally, and that he wants to work with them together. His remark concerned merely the dissemination of information about the Warsaw KKP.

Modzelewski: Explains that Walesa is referring to the report by the AS (the press agency of Solidarity). The AS had checked this matter out with him—Modzelewski—and he is responsible for it. Further, Modzelewski says that he would resign as the press spokesman of the KKP, but now this would be a sign of cowardice, and so he won't do it.

Kuron: Says that he, too, would resign from his position as a Solidarity expert if not for the present situation.

Cierniewski: Congratulates both for their political sophistication.

[The end of the proceedings of the KKP in Bydgoszcz coincides with the formal emergence of the National Strike Committee, which is to work out strike instructions, and then will move to the Gdansk Shipyard.]

Translated and edited by ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

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Michael Rustin

The British Labor Party and the Social Democrats

One would have thought that the Thatcher government would provoke a much needed renewal of the Labour party. Thatcherism has involved an explicit repudiation of the whole framework of postwar consensus politics, and has defined the policies of both the previous Labour and the Conservative governments as "creeping socialism." What was in fact the period of the highest living standards in Britain's history, and of the greatest advances in public services and social rights, has been redescribed as a time of failure, legitimizing the most misguided of radical experiments from the right. The recession of the 1970s left what we might broadly characterize as "social democracy" in Britain bereft of ideas and confidence. Nevertheless, the explicit attack on many of its assumptions (the necessity for state intervention in the economy, the virtues of increasing equality, the need for state-supported social services) seemed to galvanize a defensive commitment from many beneficiaries of this long period of social reform.

Consumers of state-provided services in Britain extend across the social spectrum. The National Health Service, the state school and higher education systems, and many other areas of recently increased provision have a large middle-class as well as working-class clientele. Polls have shown that even at the point when high taxes seemed most unpopular, majority opinion was still unwilling to sacrifice standards of social service to achieve tax cuts. It has been a radical criticism of the British welfare state that it is operated too much to the advantage of the privileged, and one might therefore expect that a very broad social constituency could be mobilized in its defense.

While the Conservative government has been cautious in its approach to legal restraints on trade unions, its hostility to unionism is clear, and is being given effect through the discipline of unemployment. There is no doubt therefore of the deep opposition of the unions (which recruit 55 percent of the workforce) to Thatcherism, and it is the unions that have kept the Labour party financially and organizationally afloat for some time. In foreign and defense policy, Thatcherism offers no concessions to growing anxieties about nuclear war, except in a half-hearted campaign for increased civil defense. Yet while one response to nuclear anxieties has been a small boom in private bomb shelters, a much more influential response has been a revival of the nuclear disarmament campaign, especially among the young, and now on a wider, European basis. This is another issue where the Labour party has seemed in touch with public feeling.

Not only is the social basis of the Thatcher government very narrow and are the interests potentially mobilized against it very large, but it also seems likely to be unsuccessful in its strategy. In its self-proclaimed role as the "only alternative" for Britain, the government has been given the benefit of many doubts by the Conservatives' natural supporters in industry and finance. But confidence is now wearing very thin indeed, with an overvalued sterling currency, high interest rates, sharply reduced profits, increased bankruptcies, and

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poor prospects for economic growth. Nor is there any probable long-run change in the bargaining strength of labor to show for the sacrifices—the National Union of Mineworkers was able to inflict another noteworthy pay-bargaining defeat on the government in December. The government has demoralized its supporters through failing even by its own criteria—public expenditure has been impossible to restrain in the recession owing to unemployment compensation and nationalized industry deficits, and the "money-supply" has turned out to be hard to measure and harder to control. For a Conservative government, there now is unusually public and deep cabinet dissension.

The situation, while depressing to live through, has seemed to offer an opportunity for an effective Labour alternative. Instead, what has happened is a major split, and the formation of a new Social Democratic party by four prominent members of previous Labour cabinets: Roy Jenkins, David Owen, Shirley Williams, and Bill Rodgers. Opposite lessons have been drawn by the Labour left and right from the defeat of 1979, and it is the bitter interaction between the two and the collapse of any coherent middle that has precipitated this major break.

Among the left, and also in the unions, the electoral defeat was undoubtedly blamed on the Labour cabinet's failure to stand up to the pressure of the City and the IMF (International Monetary Fund), and its consequent adoption of monetary restraint and a very severe incomes policy. Having obtained a high degree of cooperation from the unions, and having been able to offer some tangible reforms in return (employment protection, industrial safety, and equal pay legislation being the main ones), the leadership then squandered this success through the misjudgment of a 5 percent (subinflation rate) compulsory pay norm in the autumn of 1979. This norm was unacceptable to Labour's union membership and precipitated a round of damaging public-sector strikes. Labour had been elected in 1974 because of its supposed ability to work with the unions (after the 1973 miners' strike against the Heath government), and it was then heavily defeated on the evidence of the breakdown of this "special relationship."

For the left and the unions, this seemed more than a tactical blunder. (Shirley Williams, in her recent book, [1] seems prepared to concede it was this, though in general the attitude of the Labour right is much more hostile to the unions.) The Labour party conference, dominated as always by the unions, passed many votes critical of the Labour government between 1976 and 1979, including demands for more expansionist and interventionist economic policies against the drift toward mild recession and monetary restraint. The Trade Union Congress (TUC), usually a moderate nonideological body, also argued for more growth-oriented economic policies, including import controls and public investment, but was largely ignored. The unions during this period were able to extract concessions to their specific interests, but were not able to influence overall economic policy. So from their point of view, the need to assert a greater degree of union and party control over the parliamentary and prime ministerial leadership seemed a reasonable objective; if achieved earlier, it might have prevented Labour's subsequent defeat.

At the same time, a more ideologically militant membership was also pursuing the objective of greater rank-and-file control over the Labour party, through the instruments of mandatory re-selection of MPs and the election of the Party leader by the constituencies, the unions, and the parliamentary Party together, instead of by the parliamentary Party [the PLP] alone.*

These reforms were pursued, over a number of years, with the benefit of a degree of factional and "entryist" sectarian organization in the constituency Labour parties and in some public-sector unions. But support for these reforms extends much more widely

* The parliamentary Labour party (the PLP) is the totality of Parliament's Labour members. It has not been under the direct control of the Labour party's National Executive Committee or its annual conference. It has elected the parliamentary leader and the shadow cabinet (those who hold major positions while in opposition).

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than their common reduction to the results of sectarian infiltration suggests. Many of the unions have an interest in reform, and in addition one should note that the younger membership of the Party includes better educated white-collar and professional workers from the public sector who have been influenced by the radical culture of the late 1960s and 1970s, and who have a correspondingly more demanding conception of membership.

These reforms would strengthen, rather than constitute a fundamental break with, Labour's constitutional traditions. The Labour party has always had a collective conception of itself, holding that policy is made by party conferences, and treating the parliamentary Party leadership as in theory responsible only for the tactical implementation of "Manifesto" pledges. Unions have always controlled Party conferences and elections to the National Executive Committee through their preponderant vote, and of course parliamentary candidates have always been nominated initially by the local Party membership, even though once elected there has been a custom of virtually life-long tenure. Only the election of the leader has hitherto been wholly a parliamentary prerogative, and one could argue that this is an anomaly, given that the parliamentary leader [the potential prime minister] is also the leader of the national Labour party. In other labor or social democratic parties (for instance, the Social Democratic party [SPD] in West Germany) this problem is resolved by having separate parliamentary and national leaderships, and many right-wingers conceded that some form of representation of the ordinary membership in the election process would be legitimate. This general conception of the Labour party as a collective entity, which determines policies by vote and then submits them to endorsement by the "mandate" of the electorate, arises, as Samuel Beer has pointed out,[2] from the idea that the Party represents the working class. Whereas the new reforms sought to give some rigor to these old conventions, as a result of a more class-based analysis on the Labour left, for the party's right they demonstrated how unacceptable the conventions had now become. They might be tolerated in disuse, but their reimposition was intolerable. These constitutional changes were therefore the precipitating cause of the Social Democratic break.

From the point of view of the Social Democrats, these disputes with the left go back at least 20 years, to the "revisionist" thinking and political practice of Anthony Crosland and Hugh Gaitskell. Crosland, in his writing, and Gaitskell, through his leadership, attempted to transform the Labour party into a modern, "classless" and nonideological equivalent of the post-Bad Godesberg West German SPD. While Gaitskell was defeated in the attempt to reform the Party constitution in 1959, there was at the time no question of a split from the right. The general hegemony of the right and center over the Labour party, and their ability to use the Party constitution to maintain domination, was little in dispute; it was paradoxically reaffirmed by Gaitskell's success in 1961, reversing the preceding year's unilateralist conference vote. Wilson's succession after Gaitskell's early death, and his successful transcendence (or evasion) of left-right conflicts through the rhetoric of technological "modernization" buried these disputes. Not least, Wilson's leadership was successful in making Labour into a credible "party of government" in 1964, 1966, and 1974, and power or its prospect held the Party together, or drove dissenters away from it.

For a long period, the Party's articulate social democratic right found itself in a somewhat marginal position, at least as compared with its role under Gaitskell. Callaghan's election, following Wilson, was in some respects worse from the right-wing point of view—not for reasons of leftism (Callaghan was deeply conservative in many ways) but on grounds of intellectual principle. Callaghan was the candidate of the nonintellectual trade-union center, philistine and hostile toward ideas and ideology in any form; he had angered some of the right-wingers by undermining the trade-union legislation of

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the Wilson government—Barbara Castle's *In Place of Strife* proposals—for what were felt to be opportunistic reasons. Labour's capacity to deal with its conflicts in intellectual terms during this period seems in fact to have markedly diminished.

The conflicts of the 1950s and 1960s had involved some substantial exchanges of ideas—among, for example, Crosland, Crossman, Castle, and such allied academics as Townsend and Abel-Smith. These intellectual politicians were adept at compromise and adjustment, in the end valuing the unity of the Party above all. But in the later years of Wilson and Callaghan this relative fertility of ideas diminished, and there was a steady leakage of some of the most intelligent proto-social democrats—David Marquand, Brian Walden, Roy Jenkins, for example—out of parliamentary politics. At the point of Callaghan's election against Foot, some right-wingers even expressed a preference for Foot on grounds that his leadership might bring about a greater clarity of principle.

Crosland's early death may have been a particularly important event in this process of break-up, since he combined a commitment to the Labour party and its working-class following that seemed to grow rather than diminish as he grew older, with great intellectual and political authority on the Labour right. He was also the social democrats' strongest candidate for the post-Callaghan leadership, and therefore their best hope of achieving ultimate hegemony over the Party as a whole. Marquand's important *Encounter* article in July 1979, "Inquest on a Movement," which sets out a case for the subsequent break, takes as one of its principal arguments the critical role of liberal intellectuals in the early days of the Labour party and their currently weak position.

For its social democrats, the Labour party has appeared during the last few years to be lacking coherent ideas or principles, dominated by the trade unions, and increasingly permeated by a militant and in their view partially totalitarian left. Many social democrats have come to share a widespread establishment view that the unions represent one of the major problems of Britain's economic decline. For them, the lesson of the 1979 election defeat was more substantial than the merely tactical issue of Callaghan's maladroit handling of pay policy. The conclusion they drew was that the Party's relationship with the unions was altogether too close, and too subordinate, and that it had failed to bring about the necessary reforms of trade-union structure. While the implications of this have hardly yet been spelled out, it is evident in the general hostility to "corporatism" expressed in David Owen's new book *Facing the Future*, [3] and in the recent volume, written in memoriam to Crosland, *The Socialist Agenda*. [4] The dislike of the Labour party-trade union connection—which is also perceived on the Party's right as being an electoral liability—explains much of the hostility to the recent constitutional changes in the Party, which give the union membership no less than 50 percent of the votes in selecting a Party leader. If one defines the Labour party as a party of the working class, then this seems the most effective way of ensuring working-class control. But if one is hostile to the whole concept of a class party, then such a constitutional connection becomes anathema.

It is not, however, only a matter of constitutional principle. Labour's right-wingers have found themselves in the last few years at the losing end of a whole series of votes on substantive policies, for example, on nuclear disarmament, public ownership, and withdrawal from the EEC (the Common Market). One might expect (as Owen admits in his book) that these policy commitments will in practice be moderated before an election. But nevertheless, the right has been markedly on the defensive and is faced with a climate in which the pressure will be toward more radical policies, as the recession deepens and Thatcher's neocapitalist experiment arouses deeper opposition. There is also anxiety on the Party's right that a new kind of membership is taking control of the constituency parties, and will be able to use mandatory reselection to intimidate MPs into compliance. The Social Democratic break is in this sense a preemptive move, setting itself against a radi-

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cal left program that can be encapsulated in a number of hostile formulas—"the siege economy," neutralism, state centralism, totalitarian party organization, and so forth. Yet the anxieties of Social Democrats about the Labour party's direction are not mirrored by optimism on the left, which sees itself for the most part in a rather weaker position than these fears would imply. There is the sense by both right and left that the old compromises have been exhausted, even if neither side has yet worked out much to put in their place.

What may we expect from the new Social Democratic party? The Social Democrats can perhaps be understood as the separating-out of a tradition of collectivist liberalism from the Labour party into which it became absorbed early in this century. This suggestion is made in Marquand's article, and a number of recent studies have explored this intellectual history.[5] But while the Social Democrats are more reconciled to state intervention than the rural and small-business based Liberals, their immediate line of self-differentiation has been against the collectivism and statism of the Labour party, as Owen's and Williams's books made clear. The argument about the Labor party constitution, for instance, is a clear polarization of rival liberal and collectivist conceptions of the political party. In this debate,[6] the social democrats first asserted that parliamentary representatives [MPs] were in effect sovereign and should not be accountable to *any* interests or membership outside. Later the emphasis of their argument shifted to a critique of "minoritarian" activism and participatory decision-making, and to an advocacy of the secret ballot by all Party members. Owen has recently gone further—proposing computerized referenda by the whole membership of the new party.

The setting-up of this new Party has been a remarkably leadership-dominated initiative, not the result of defections in the ranks of the Labour party or trade unions, which have so far been very few. The "Gang of Four" have in effect appealed to a new following, from the "middle ground of politics" over the heads of the existing organization, relying on their undoubted personal popularity and the sympathy of the mass media to recruit them a new following. They have given their initial launch a somewhat middle-class flavor, by an unusual emphasis on telephoned subscription by credit card and one suspects, from the funds that seem available, that they have some liberal business backing.

Curiously, hardly any program has been offered as yet by the new party, other than a commitment to the EEC, to Western defense with some unspecified multilateral initiatives toward disarmament, to decentralization (in very general terms), and to making the mixed economy work through greater "continuity" of policy. Anathemas of the extremes are the principal stock-in-trade of the new party at present, and their leaders must hope (not without some reason, it must be added) that grossly ideological commitments by both their antagonists will deliver them a majority. In combination with the Liberal party, they are currently receiving very high opinion-poll ratings—up to 46 percent of voter preferences—and must be taken very seriously indeed as potential holders at least of a balance of power.

While their formal policy commitments are few, it is possible to gain a more detailed impression of their likely direction from David Owen's and Shirley Williams's recent books. These are both quite serious and worthwhile contributions, declaring substantial commitments to equal opportunity in the spheres of welfare, education, and health, and a real concern over bureaucratization and centralization. Their fundamental analysis of the British social and economic structure and its problems does, however, appear to be somewhat shallow, and lacking a clear analytic basis. In this respect their works differ substantially from Crosland's *Future of Socialism* of 25 years before, which grounded its revisionist program in a sociology of power and ownership.

The Social Democrats' writings assert the world view and interests of the middle strata of society, hostile to the centralized bureauc-

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racies of capital and labor, supporting small businesses, cooperatives, and voluntary effort, and seeking reconciliation and consensus between contending classes. Much reliance is placed on ethical principles, and on disinterested reasoning, as opposed to ideology and power. One has the feeling from David Owen's book that he believes all problems should be amenable to rational, pragmatic solution, if only disinterested attention is given to them. There is a systematic idealism and inflation of the role of political brokerage and a denial of the intractability of conflicting social forces. Both Williams and Owen indicate some sympathy with a more idealistic and romantic politics of ecological, cooperative, or antimilitarist hues, while being in all cases hostile to the "harder" commitments (against nuclear power, private capital, or defense systems), which such politics commonly involves.

While asserting a modified socialist ethic of equality and freedom, both Owen and Williams appear to have abandoned, if they ever had one, any sense of historical transformation, the common agenda of all socialist movements. The sense that progress is achieved by class forces acting against other class forces, however nonviolently, is absent from the Social Democrats' writing. Williams argues, by bare assertion, that political pluralism and private ownership are inseparable, without apparently recognizing that large-scale private ownership of capital is inherently undemocratic and inegalitarian. Elsewhere in her book she does note the extreme and unusual degree of concentration of capital in Britain, but offers only the encouragement of small businesses as a response. In Owen's book too there is a discrepancy between the identification of large concentrations of capital, and the absence of measures to control or disperse them.

This equation of the mixed economy with political pluralism is elided with another quite different distinction between gradualists and revolutionaries; the purpose is to show that even gradualists who favor the long-term abolition of private capital, in some sense or another, are unavoidably totalitarian. These writers appear to be unaware of the contemporary discussion within the Marxist tradition of the differences between absolutist or Eastern state systems, and liberal or Western states. A pluralist socialism is not an easy concept, but it will not be advanced without more serious engagement with these issues, nor by an apparently fundamental commitment to preserve the existing powers of capital.

With this analysis, the Social Democrats no longer recognize the need for a substantial class basis for their own politics, though in reality no major move toward equality or socialism seems likely to derive from anything else. Greater equality requires a reallocation of power, resources, or esteem, and will not be achieved through the expression of ethical principles. The question that must be asked therefore of those who advocate such principles as Owen and Williams still do is: by what instrument are they to be furthered?

One wonders how long, divorced from organic connection with working-class institutions and interests, the Social Democrats will find egalitarian commitments politically functional or even congenial to the new following they will recruit. The electoral alliance they need with the Liberal party will be a problem in this respect, especially since the Liberals, with their well-developed local organization, may well provide most of the troops. The Liberal party is generally rather antipathetic to egalitarian values and to the state interventions that enforce them, and this may be an important area of disagreement.

So far as the remainder of the Labour party is concerned, and especially its left, recent preoccupation has been mainly with the constitutional questions of internal power, not with programs, organization, or theory. The commitment to strengthen the power of the Party seems a rational response to the appalling drift of the last two Labour governments away from the interests of their supporters, particularly under internal and external financial pressures. But there has been a quite

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excessive concentration on the mechanics of internal party power, and a quite unrealistic assumption that the activists of the Labour left, if only they had more leverage over their party machine and its elected leaders, would quickly bring themselves in sight of socialism. Socialism is interpreted in these discussions as a well-understood formula, requiring only determined propagation to be made real. The truth of the matter is that socialist ideas have never had less purchase than they have now on the minds of the British people, including its working class. Neither organizationally nor intellectually are socialists equipped to bring about even a substantial program of reform.

There is an urgent need for a program of party renewal. Labour needs a much enlarged membership and funding. It needs to find a way of engaging with occupational and professional interests, and of politicizing them in some serious way. This might be achieved either through a more political role being taken by trade unions, or through the incorporation into Party membership of occupational branches.[7] The Party needs to replace its intellectual capital, and create a larger body of "organic intellectuals" committed to its programs of reform. The role taken by the Fabian Society throughout the history of the Labour party, in providing intellectual muscle, was always a somewhat elitist and state-oriented one, but it is now too restricted in style for the more participatory and pluralist politics of the present day. The Labour party has not even managed to create a theoretical journal, though this is now being remedied. This paucity of intellectual production is in marked contrast to the efforts of the many research organizations that have nurtured the development of Britain's New Right.

Yet there has been a striking development of a radical and Marxist subculture in Britain the last 15 years, which should be a resource (though it has yet to be) for a mainly working-class party. The expansion of higher education and the effects of the various phases of the New Left, both in its more "English" and more Marxist and internationally oriented phases, has created a significant body of neo-Marxist academic work, with left-wing minority journals in many disciplinary fields, and also with a considerable amount of publishing, left bookshop, and radical community activity in the cultural and social professions. This radical culture has been largely divorced from actual politics, and has had little or no effect on mainstream debate. Such connections as it has had have been mainly with ultraleft groupings, hostile to gradualism and consequently unable, in English conditions, to build lasting organizations or retain their transient followings. If some stronger connection between these cultural resources (themselves under the most direct attack from Thatcherism) and active politics could be made, there would be a chance for the needed renewal of socialist ideas.

Meanwhile, the mainstream Labour response to the Social Democratic defection has been one of panic. Foot, whose first steps in the leadership gave an encouraging priority to extraparliamentary mobilization on unemployment, appears to be spending much time trying to hold the Party together, and especially to discourage further pressure by the left, for example, in Tony Benn's recently announced candidacy for the deputy leadership now held by Denis Healey. There will be a determined effort by the center and right of the parliamentary Party and by the union leadership to modify some of the constitutional decisions of last December, and to prevent any further left-wing gains. The object is to move the Labour party to the center, to cast off any stigma of extremism that might enable a Social Democratic-Liberal alliance. This is all understandable, but it will not be a sufficient defense against the Social Democrats to offer a merely duller and more conservative form of moderation, while under heavy internal attack from the left. Given that alternative, the electorate may well choose moderates who are younger, more personable and articulate, and who seem to believe they are saying something new.

The truth is that the national (and international) situation does call for some more fundamental socialist programs. The arms race is in a chronically worsening state. The capitalist economies have not succeeded in resolving

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the problem of oil surplus, recession, and technological unemployment. They have not found a means of redistributing enough resources to the Third World to regenerate growth both in poor and rich countries. Capitalist elites have become frightened of the redistributive pressures from increasingly prosperous and educated populations and, being unwilling to contain them through further concessions of rights and powers (for example, across the threshold of industrial democracy), are instead using deflationary and even toying with repressive means of control. It is not that these problems have simple solutions, or that socialists have blueprints. But they do demand urgent address. Labor's problem in Britain (and internationally, since these problems cannot be solved in one weak country), is to devise socialist solutions that, like the program for social reconstruction of the postwar period, become part of the popular consciousness. There needs to be some maximalism in thought, but sensitivity and caution in political action.

The electoral system in Britain is heavily stacked against minority parties. The Liberal-Social Democratic alliance has first to achieve substantial representation before it can change this system to its own advantage. It would be likely then to introduce proportional representation, and a state subsidy to political parties, to diminish the advantage to Labour and Conservatives of having the financial support of organized labor and capital. The Labour party's base in the unions and the Conservatives' in private business is a substantial resource, whatever the immediate electoral unpopularity of these connections, and Labour may again succeed in making its capacity to work with the unions an electoral asset, as it was in 1974. Britain does not have a substantial agricultural population able to support a Liberal party, as West Germany does, and regional loyalties in most peripheral parts of Britain tend to go to nationalist groupings, not to a center party. These factors should count in Labour's favor.

Whether Labour still has the capacity to respond to this challenge is a question. One has the sense that the erosion of membership and stagnation of organization has taken a serious toll. Its internal divisions are deep, and the Party faces the problem of holding its increasingly radicalized union and socialist following together while not becoming identified as an extremist party. It can only do this by influencing, rather than merely following, the terms of the wider political debate, moving the electorate as a whole to a somewhat more leftish stance. This requires some considerable political resource, and it must be said that at the moment the parliamentary Labour party shows few signs of possessing it. These are, however, early days. The Labour party has often enough been a shambles in the period between elections, and yet been able to recover when the electoral conflict again became imminent. The battle for position between left and right *is* an essential one, determining the shape of subsequent compromises, even though one hopes for more creative terms in this necessary argument. It will be important beyond the British Isles if it can be convincingly demonstrated that the present problems of Western capitalism do require socialist analyses and solutions, rather than mere pragmatism, which is what the Social Democrats will offer. It was, after all, the failures of pragmatism that got us into this crisis.

Notes

All publications cited below are British.

[1] Shirley Williams, *Politics is for People* (Penguin, 1981).

[2] Samuel Beer, *Modern British Politics* (Heinemann, 1965).

[3] David Owen, *Facing the Future* (Jonathan Cape, 1981).

[4] David Lipsey and Dick Leonard, eds., *The Socialist Agenda* (Jonathan Cape, 1981).

[5] Peter Clarke, *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge University Press, 1978); Stefan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[6] I discuss these constitutional debates more extensively in "Different Conceptions of Party: Labor Constitutional Debates," in *New Left Review*, March-April 1981.

[7] The idea of workplace branches was discussed in theoretical terms in my article "The New Left and the Present Crisis," in *New Left Review*, May-June 1980, at the same time as it was being introduced as a constitutional change (adopted but not yet implemented) in the Labour party. □

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John D. Stephens

Impasse & Breakthrough — in Sweden

After the Contradictions of Social Democratic Policy

The onset of stagflation in the '70s has stimulated attacks on the welfare state and its chief proponent, social democracy. The right-wing attack has sought to link causally social democracy's program—redistribution through public-sector expansion—to the economic problems suffered by the West.[1] Left critics, among them Alan Wolfe, credit the success of postwar capitalism to social democratic management, while attributing the current decline of capitalism to its inability to transcend that system.[2] Others have linked the decline of social democracy to long-term changes in the social structure, such as the shrinking working-class portion of the population. My purpose here is to examine the development of the welfare state under social democratic auspices, with a particular focus on Sweden, in order to shed some light on this debate.

Sweden is the ideal case for an examination of the various hypotheses on social democracy and the welfare state. After 44 years in office, in which it built up one of the most highly developed welfare states in the world, Sweden's Social Democratic party was turned out by the electorate in 1976, and was kept out again in 1979 (albeit by only 0.1 percent of the vote). It is my thesis that the pattern of welfare-state development represents a compromise between labor and capital and that the fall of the Social Democrats from power is a direct result of contradictory aspects of that compromise.

Social Democracy and the Welfare State

IT IS PERHAPS one of the greatest myths of contemporary social science, perpetrated by Marxist, liberal, and conservative social scientists alike, that the political economies, class relations, and distribution patterns of all developed capitalist democracies are essentially the same. True, all these societies are characterized by political democracy and economies dominated by private ownership of the means of production, with some state intervention in the form of public expenditure and Keynesian macroeconomic policy. Conservatives view this pattern as the "logic of industrialism"; Marxists see in it the logic of capitalist development. In fact, the patterns of class relations and the structure of the political economy vary greatly among capitalist societies, and these variations are not random but highly systematic, and the relative power of capital and labor in a society is the key variable that explains these variations. I have documented this in detail in my recent book *The Transition from Capitalism to Socialism*; but let me briefly outline my argument here.

Though all capitalist democracies have developed some form of "welfare state," the level of nonmilitary public expenditure varies greatly from well over half of the Gross Domestic Product in such countries as Sweden and Austria to under a quarter in the United States and in Switzerland. The redistributive impact of public expenditure also varies greatly with the incidence of taxation, and with the distribution of transfer payments and free or subsidized public goods. In such countries as France, taxes are very regressive and transfe payments go disproportionately to the better off. In Sweden, taxes are progressive, and lower-income

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groups get proportionately more of the transfer payments and free and subsidized public goods. Cross-national comparisons show that these differences can be attributed primarily to the organizational strength of labor, the incumbency of socialist parties, and the existence of highly centralized bargaining. Over two-thirds of the variation in the level of public expenditure is explained by the last two factors, which in turn are highly correlated to the percentage of the labor force that is organized. Labor organization also explains over 60 percent of the variation in income distribution among these countries. Let us compare the polar types, Sweden and the United States. In Sweden, 80 percent of the labor force is organized, the Social Democrats were in power from 1932 to 1976, bargaining is greatly centralized, and the public sector is highly developed and effects massive redistribution. In the U.S., only 20 percent of the labor force is organized, there is no socialist party, and bargaining is decentralized; therefore the public sector is not very highly developed or redistributive.

The causal chain is clear enough: union strength is a source of power at the bargaining table, as well as the main source of the political mobilization potential of leftist parties. Leftist parties use their tenure in office to expand redistributive public expenditure, to lower unemployment, and so forth. The role of centralized bargaining is more ambiguous. Briefly, I would argue that in countries where organized labor is very strong and socialist parties are in government (alone or in coalition), a type of corporatist bargaining develops among organized labor, the government, and capital, in which labor trades off wage restraint for the expansion of redistributive public expenditure. Comparative historical work bears out this interpretation: centralized bargaining never develops until more than 40 percent of all wage and salary earners are organized, and until social democrats form a stable government. Without that incumbency, the labor movement cannot be sure that the government will uphold its end of the deal. Without economic and political power, labor is not strong enough to make effective wage demands that are a threat to accumulation.

A historical examination of the Swedish case elucidates this pattern. Early in its history, the Swedish Social Democratic party's program was socialist, not welfare statist. After the party won the struggle for political democracy in 1917, it attempted to advance the more radical elements of its program in the election campaigns of 1920 and 1928. On both occasions the party met with serious electoral setback. At this point, the party modified its program and campaigned on Keynesian reflationary policies and in its 1932 campaign on the expansion of the public sector. The party won that election in 1932 and was returned to power in 1936. These victories and policies, along with continued growth in labor organization, stimulated a reassessment of strategy on the part of the leading elements of capital, as represented by SAF, the employers' federation. Since it appeared that the Social Democrats would stay in power for a long time, SAF's members recognized that compromise was necessary. SAF entered into negotiations with LO, the blue-collar trade union confederation, and concluded an agreement two years later that established the routinization of collective bargaining and labor peace in Sweden. This 1938 agreement laid the groundwork for the development of economy-wide bargaining between SAF and LO (and later also TCO, the confederation of the white-collar unions) in the immediate postwar period. Centralized bargaining was a prerequisite for the corporatist policy arrangement I mentioned earlier. Thus "corporatism" is a product of compromise between labor and capital, stimulated by a situation where labor is too strong to be shut out of the system yet not strong enough to take control of the accumulation process (too weak to push through a socialist program).

The core of the compromise between labor and capital, as developed in postwar Sweden by the joint policy of the Social Democratic party and LO, was a trade-off. The labor movement—which in Sweden means the Social Democratic party and LO[3]—received

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redistribution, primarily through public-sector expansion; and capital retained control over technological change and investment. Both agreed on the desirability of maximal possible growth. Aside from public-sector expansion, labor-market policy was a key part of the labor movement's strategy. To maintain very low levels of unemployment, the policy went well beyond Keynesian demand management to encompass a comprehensive labor market and wage policy aimed at reducing the unemployment/inflation trade-off, while equalizing wages (the Rehn-Meidner policy).

By the late 1940s, with about three-quarters of the blue-collar workforce organized, workers' wage gains would have been translated into increased inflation and deterioration of Sweden's export market, a key concern for a small export-dependent country such as Sweden. The Social Democratic government asked for and received wage restraint from LO. Since LO did not consider this policy viable in the long run, it developed an alternative policy aimed at structural change in the economy. Through fiscal policy, selective taxation, and trade-union wage pressure, distributed profits were to be squeezed. LO would be able to demand equal pay for equal work across the economy, regardless of the ability of the company to pay (the "solidaristic wage policy"). This clearly would force some low-wage companies out of business. The workers released by these companies would be provided alternative jobs through an "active labor-market policy" consisting of job retraining, provision of unemployment benefits, moving costs, information on employment possibilities, and public-works jobs. The effect of these policies was to reduce structural unemployment through increasing labor mobility and to shift workers to high-productivity and high-wage sectors. Thus the policy would upgrade average wages and the overall productivity of the Swedish economy, while reducing the inflationary impact of high employment. This policy could hardly have been carried out in a country lacking the conditions that prevail in Sweden, since it requires a high level of labor organization, a centralized apparatus for wage negotiations, and socialist participation in government.

WHILE THIS POLICY left the control of accumulation of capital largely in private hands, the Social Democrats did make some inroads into capitalist control of the economy. Aside from Keynesian economic management, selective decision-making rights of capital in such areas as manpower policies, pollution control, and job safety have been socialized. Furthermore, the public pension funds account for half of the total gross savings and half of the credit supply in the country. Yet only in the housing market has the actual investment decision itself been socialized. Elsewhere, new investment is under control of capital and thus subject to the typical criteria of highest-rate return, without regard to social costs.

Incidentally, as Michael Harrington points out, all advanced capitalist societies are subject to increasing state interventionism. This does not always, or even usually, result in increasing democratization of control over the economy. On the contrary, in countries where labor parties exercise little influence, such as France, this intervention is essentially a form of collective capitalist planning. In countries such as Sweden, state intervention will represent the same sort of compromise between labor and capital that exists in the rest of Swedish public policy. In order to avoid the errors of Alan Wolfe's analysis that equates state intervention with social democratic influence in a country, it is important to recognize that the ends of state interventionism vary with the power relations between classes. Wolfe concludes, as a consequence of this error, that social democracy was almost politically dominant in the advanced capitalist world in the 1950s and early '60s. Yet social democracy in fact was in power for only a very small fraction of this period in any of the six major capitalist countries (Japan, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany). Thus neither the experience of these countries nor that of the advanced capitalist world as a whole gives us

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any indication of the viability (or inviability) of the "social democratic model."

The Contradictions of Social Democratic Development

THE SWEDISH EXPERIENCE helps elucidate the dilemmas of social democratic development—of a pattern of political economy that is the result of compromise between capital and a strongly organized and politically cohesive labor movement. The Social Democrats' defeat in the 1976 election has been explained in a number of ways that can be divided into two broad categories: the first emphasizing long-term changes in Sweden's social structure, the second the immediate issues of the 1976 campaign.

The Social Democratic sociologist Jan Lindhagen, writing in late 1976 and 1977 in *Tiden*, the Social Democrats' theoretical magazine, argues the former position. Lindhagen writes that the 1976 electoral defeat was the culmination of a long series of elections, beginning in the early '60s, in which the bourgeois bloc constantly increased its share of the electorate, while the Social Democrats' share stagnated (except in 1968). Lindhagen links this to the structural changes of the postwar period: the depopulation of Sweden's north, a socialist stronghold; the decline of the mill towns (bruksamhälle) relative to the rise of the big cities and their suburbs; and the decline of the secondary sector relative to the tertiary sector. All these structural changes have eliminated the pockets of working-class community and culture that used to insulate substantial segments of the working class from the influence of bourgeois society.

Though the proponents of the second category emphasize the issues of the elections, they differ widely in the implications of their analysis. The sociologist Hans Zetterberg, director of the Swedish Institute for Public Opinion Research (SIFO), presents a picture with the most negative implications for the future of social democracy. Although he finds no evidence that the electoral defeat of 1976 was the result of a public reaction against the welfare state, he argues that the Social Democrats were on the wrong (the unpopular) side of three key issues: nuclear energy, socialization (the "wage-earner fund" issue), and government bureaucracy. Survey evidence on the nuclear-power issue is quite unambiguous. On this issue the Social Democrats lost many votes in the last weeks of the campaign to the Center party, and these votes indeed provided the margin of victory for the bourgeois coalition. Yet this was not the whole story; even before the nuclear-power issue came to a head, the Social Democrats were doing considerably worse in the polls than in earlier years. This downturn of popular appeal was linked temporally to a series of "affairs," most important among them the tax cases of Ingmar Bergman and Astrid Lindgren. Zetterberg argues that these cases sparked public resentment to the government bureaucracy, or to "the concession state," as he calls it. The public generally resented the interventions of the state, constantly forcing the individual citizen to get state permits—in order to build a house, to buy foreign currency, to buy agricultural land, and so forth. Zetterberg also argues that the LO proposal for "wage-earner funds" was so radical that it generated great public opposition in much the same way that radical programs in 1920, 1928, and 1948 had led to Social Democratic setbacks. The new proposal was indeed quite radical, as it called for transfer of a certain portion of company profits to the employees in the form of collectively owned shares of stock. This portion of employee-owned stock would continue to increase in relation to privately owned shares until, after a period of approximately 30 years, the employees would own a majority of stock shares in the firm. In Zetterberg's view these three factors, together, brought the Social Democratic party to the end of its rope; the voters clearly rejected the party's orientation toward increasing state interventionism, as well as any attempt to go beyond its traditional policies.

The sociologist Walter Korpi is less pessimistic.[4] In his response to Lindhagen in *Tiden* (in 1977), he argues that the most important characteristic of Social Democratic

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support had been the cross-fluctuation from highs in 1962 to lows in 1966, back to record highs in 1968, and then to the low of 1976. These fluctuations, Korpi argues, cannot be explained by long-term structural changes but rather by the changing content of policy. The important issues in the elections in which the Social Democrats suffered setbacks appear to have been directly connected with their unqualified commitment to growth at the expense of the environmental issues (for instance, nuclear power), regional balance, and decentralization. Thus Korpi links these setbacks, indirectly, to the compromises on which the welfare state was built.

The evidence clearly supports Korpi's contention that long-term changes in the social structure are not undermining the Social Democrats' electoral base. After an extensive analysis of survey data collected by SIFO, I found no indication that such developments had occurred.[5] The coincidence of the Social Democrats' decline with the rise in public concern for environmental issues, decentralization, and more balanced regional growth argues that Korpi's analysis is correct. Sweden, like many other Western democracies, experienced a leftist upsurge in the late '60s that in 1968 helped carry the Social Democrats to their greatest electoral triumph in the postwar period. In the '70s, this wave was followed by the "green wave," which focused on environmental concerns. The Center party, formerly the Farmer's party, emerged as the chief promoter of these concerns, and so the "green wave" carried that party from the status of the smallest bourgeois party in the mid-'60s to the largest in the mid-'70s. In 1976 it brought the Center's leader, Thörbjorn Fälldin, to the prime ministry. At the core of the party's appeal was an antigrowth, antitechnology current and a romantic vision of the solidarity of small-town and rural life of bygone days, adding an irrational element to Swedish politics that had been absent before. Fälldin's militant, moralistic antinuclear stance was certainly a key factor in the Center's impressive showing in 1976.

We might add to Korpi's analysis that the Social Democrats' setbacks were not only brought about by past policy commitments, but these commitments in turn were directly connected with the *contradictory aspects* of the compromise between labor and capital, which had led to the development of Sweden's welfare state. From the mid-'60s on, the Swedish labor movement was successful when it could transcend the terms of that compromise, while it failed when it could not do so. First, let us look at the problems that were created at least in part by the labor movement's policies up to the mid-'60s.

(1) *Dehumanization of Work Life* • The policy of promoting maximal growth through structural rationalization carried out under capitalist direction resulted in a dehumanization of work life. Social costs of technological change were not calculated in the capitalist ledgers. The trade unions indeed were committed to technological change and increasing productivity; these were the necessary preconditions for increases in the level of living conditions and for the financing of state redistributive policies. This commitment prevented them from opposing changes in work organization and technology even when such changes lowered the quality of work life.

(2) *Lack of Employee Influence on the Shop Floor* • The highly centralized nature of the Swedish labor movement, which had facilitated the wage and structural rationalization policies, now blocked any advance on control issues in the immediate workplace, since these were difficult to deal with in central bargaining. Local bargaining carried on after the central bargain was agreed upon proved ineffective, since the employers were no longer threatened by the strike weapon. This lack of employee influence on issues concerning control obviously further hindered any positive response to the issue of dehumanization of work life. Shop-floor dissatisfaction was highlighted by the result of a survey of living and working conditions in 1968, high turnover in industrial production, and a wave of wildcat strikes in 1969.

(3) *Ecology and Nuclear Power* • The labor movement's commitment to maximal growth in order to finance redistribution was a key

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factor in its strong support for nuclear power, and also made it a latecomer to environmental protection issues. This allowed the Center party to take the political lead in these areas—and to become the main beneficiary of the Social Democrats' decline in the years 1968-76.

(4) *Regional Imbalance* • Labor-market policy was pursued in such a way that it increased the depopulation of Sweden's north by socializing the costs of labor mobility and ignoring the social costs of that mobility. The structural rationalization and solidaristic wage policies forced less efficient businesses to close and the workers to move to other jobs. Without a government policy of steering investment to assure regional balance, the subsidies to increase labor mobility in turn subsidized businesses to move to the country's southern part or for new businesses to establish themselves there. This issue fired and fit in well with the Center party's romantic appeals to the past.

(5) *Bureaucracy and Centralization* • A number of labor's policies increased centralization in the economy and in the polity. As previously explained, union and employer centralization was in part a result of labor's political and organizational strength and led to a number of innovations in wage and economic policy. One of these policies, the solidaristic wage policy, contributed directly to increasing centralization in the economy. Finally and perhaps most important from the point of view of adverse political reaction was the fact that the policy of encroaching public control on economic decision-making rights had highly visible victims but practically invisible beneficiaries. For instance, city planning and land-use policies were designed to benefit the public as a whole. Yet the individual using a public park or a municipal subway is much less aware of gain than the individual denied a housing permit is aware of loss. In a word, this method of socializing control restricts some people's decision-making rights for the benefit of the public, but it does not give the right to the general public as individuals so that they have a sense of participation in the expansion of democratic control. There is some truth to Hans Zetterberg's image of the "concession state"; many people are told "you can't" on different issues, and nobody is told "you can." All of the bourgeois parties but especially the Center party attacked the Social Democrats for promoting political and economic centralization.

(6) *Concentration of Wealth* • The labor movement's economic and labor-market policy resulted in increased concentration of wealth in the hands of the richest individuals and financial concerns, the owners of the most productive and technologically advanced enterprises. This is particularly true of the solidaristic wage policy, which resulted in the trade unions actually demanding less from the most profitable enterprises than they would have under decentralized collective bargaining.

Privately held wealth is very concentrated in Sweden; 15 families together with 2 corporations hold majority control of 200 large industrial concerns employing almost 50 percent of all employees in private industry. In "The Swedish Promise," his December 4, 1980 article in the *New York Review of Books*, Robert Heilbroner likened the role of the Wallenberg family in Sweden to that of the Rockefellers in the United States—but this very much understates the case. The Wallenberg family owns a major interest in 70 corporations (including SAAB and the Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken, the largest bank in the country), which employ 20 percent of all the workers in private industry. These figures may be somewhat deceiving since Sweden is a much smaller country than the U.S. But even in proportionate terms stockholding is more concentrated in Sweden than in the United States.

But while it is clear that privately held wealth is very concentrated and has become more concentrated in postwar Sweden, the situation changes considerably if one includes the public pension fund. This fund, now invested largely in housing (though it is also the largest shareholder in Volvo), is large enough to buy all the shares of all companies

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listed on the Swedish Stock Exchange. Of course, the institution of the comprehensive pension plan in 1960 is related to the increasing concentration of private wealth since the existence of such a plan reduces the incentives of working- and middle-class people to save for their old age. If we view the pension fund as the "property" of future pensioners, then we can see the trend toward a dispersion of wealth. However, the debate in Sweden has not been conducted in these terms.

(7) *Socialization* • The labor movement got into political trouble for not addressing this issue over long periods of time and then being forced into dealing with it by the contradictions of its own past policy. Because it could not gain support for its own more radical policies, labor came to a compromise with capital that entailed suppressing the issue of socialization. But as its subsequent policy produced an increasing concentration of wealth, labor was forced to address the question and found that its only option was to suggest increases in social ownership—as we shall see. The problem it faced was that by suppressing the issue for so long, it had failed to build any support for its position on it, even within its own ranks.

The Swedish Labor Movement's Response

ON BALANCE, the Swedish labor movement—both the unions and the Social Democratic party—has responded positively to the contradictions of its past policy, particularly when its responses are compared to those of social democracy elsewhere. But some of these responses also had their own problems. The issues of ecology and nuclear power, regional imbalance and decentralization have been coopted politically by the Center party, though the Social Democrats did come up with policies on the environmental issue (emphasizing the work environment), regional policy, and decentralization of power (emphasizing increased employee decision-making rights). But most of these issues were more vigorously promoted by the Center and have helped the bourgeois bloc politically. It is in fact fair to say that they propelled the bourgeois bloc into power.

The Social Democrats have been successful both in emphasizing their traditional issues, redistribution and employment, in new ways as well as in promoting entirely new issues, in particular workers' control—thus addressing some of the contradictions of their past policies. After a disastrous local election in 1966, the Social Democrats initiated a new industrial policy and subsequently a new policy of equalization expressed by the slogan "Increased Equality," which helped lead them to the electoral victory of 1968.

From the point of view of the long-term viability of social democracy, most important has been the development of its program for "economic democracy." This program both addresses the contradiction of the capital-labor compromise of the years 1930-65 and transcends that compromise. Taken as a whole, it is nothing less than a program for the transition to socialism. The first phase—the expansion of employee decision-making rights in the enterprise—was initiated in large part as a direct response to two contradictory consequences of past policy: the dehumanization of work and the lack of employees' influence on the shop floor. LO published a report on the subject in 1971, and the issue dominated Swedish politics from then until 1976, resulting in the passage of a whole series of acts that substantially increased employees' decision-making power, not only over their immediate working conditions but also over the broader policies of the enterprise. In its legislative outcome this political campaign was highly successful: labor got virtually everything it wanted, despite the adamant objections of the employers' federation. The political results for the Social Democrats were more ambiguous, since, in most cases, in the face of unified TCO and LO support for the program, two bourgeois parties, the Center and the Liberals, took the prolabor position. But, on balance, the program must have benefited the Social Democrats, since otherwise they would have been without an issue in the early '70s, for by then they had exhausted the potential of their traditional

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program for "equalization through public-sector expansion."

The next phase in the program for economic democracy was launched in the fall of 1975 with the publication of the "Meidner Plan." Four years earlier, the LO congress of 1971 had appointed a commission headed by economist Rudolf Meidner to study some of the negative effects of the solidaristic wage policy and to suggest solutions to these problems. The policy's major "negative effect" was that, if carried out properly, it contributed to the concentration of wealth. The central directive the LO congress gave the Meidner group was to develop a proposal that would complement the solidaristic wage policy in ways that would counteract the concentration of wealth. The Meidner group's proposal also was to suggest new sources of capital accumulation, and ways to reinforce employee influence through participation in ownership. Given these directives, the group had to, and did, come up with a proposal that would transcend the compromise between labor and capital, which had limited Social Democratic policy up to the '70s.

LO wanted a solution to the problem of wage restraint paying for new reinvestment, whose benefits accrue to the capitalist. The employees, of course, cannot withdraw all capital gains of an enterprise in wages and salaries, for then there will be no growth. Thus, the only solution to this problem—providing for reinvestment and also benefiting the employees—is to let the accumulated capital accrue to the employees as a collectivity. This is precisely what the Meidner group suggested: a portion of the profits of each enterprise should be transferred to the employees collectively in the form of newly issued shares of stock. And so, over a period of approximately 30 years, most enterprises would come under employee control.

Unfortunately for the Swedish labor movement, this solution to a problem (one is tempted to say *the* problem), itself became a problem—a political liability. The proposal came out less than a year before the 1976 election, and so the labor movement did not have sufficient time to prepare the electorate properly for it. Many analysts, including Hans Zetterberg, have argued that the Meidner Plan contributed to the Social Democrats' defeat in the 1976 election. Actually, the evidence is somewhat ambiguous. The polls show that on this proposal the labor movement did not have the support of the electorate. But the polls also show that few voters were really interested in the Meidner Plan, and those who were interested were to be found mostly at the ends of the political spectrum (left-wing Social Democrats, Communists, and Conservatives), rather than among voters who might swing from one political bloc to another. In any case, the issue did not help the Social Democrats.

Yet labor's response was not to retreat as it had done in 1920, 1928, and 1948. The proposal was modified, in part to eliminate some aspects that had aroused popular opposition. The original proposal, which had called for formal ownership of the funds by the trade unions, was vulnerable to attacks by the bourgeois parties and press on the ground that it would concentrate too much power in Sweden in the hands of the unions. The proposal was revised in 1978 and again in November 1980. The first revision called for the employees' funds to be developed through taxes on both the wage bill and profits. The 1980 revisions, presented in the form of a joint LO-Social Democratic proposal to a parliamentary commission, suggest that 24 funds be developed, one in each of Sweden's 24 provinces. The funds' board would be chosen in a general election by all individuals with pension "points" (by those who have made contributions to the public pension plan that is compulsory for all wage and salary earners). Voting rights of the shares in the funds would be held both by the employees in the enterprise in question and by the provincial boards. The profits of the shares would be used to augment the present pension funds. The long-term result, like that of previous plans, would be the development of a form of relatively decentralized market socialism in Sweden.

What are the chances for the passage of this proposal? Let me make an educated

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guess based on past study of Swedish politics. In his recent, interesting article mentioned earlier, Robert Heilbroner draws somewhat pessimistic conclusions. There are some ambiguities in his argument, since he does believe that some form of the Meidner proposal will pass—but not one, it seems, that would result in a radical (if gradually instituted) transformation of the patterns of ownership and control of capital. Heilbroner's contention rests on his assumption that such a democratization of ownership and control relations would result in a decline, perhaps a drastic one, in efficiency. Clearly, there are limits to the reorganization of work in any industrial society, and these are even greater in a society such as Sweden, which is and will continue to be a market system heavily dependent on exports and thus on competition in the world market. But the democratization of ownership and control will not necessarily lead to a totalistic, utopian reorganization of work and thus to a decline in efficiency. Worker-controlled enterprises have shown themselves capable of producing efficiently and of competing with privately owned firms. So I would question Heilbroner's prediction that the present version of the plan will be rejected because it is not workable.

I am prepared to argue almost the opposite: though the proposal may not pass for political reasons (that is, continued bourgeois government), the Swedish labor movement will continue to push for the passage of wage-earner funds because, from the labor movement's point of view, they are the *only* workable solution to the key problem facing Sweden today: the search for a policy that will both insure sufficient rates of reinvestment necessary for economic growth *and* result in a distribution of income and wealth that is acceptable to the labor movement. Labor really has only one other alternative: to give up being a movement for reform and simply attempt to administer the status quo efficiently. The old strategy of growth and public-sector expansion is exhausted because (1) public-sector expansion is reaching a point of diminishing political returns; (2) the current economic stagnation means significant expansion could occur only through significant rollbacks of private consumption; (3) the contradictions of past policies would only continue to accumulate, leading to further political decline.

The renewal of social democracy in Sweden (and in most other countries) now depends on its transcending the traditional strategy and on its continuing push for a program of economic democracy initiated in the 1970s. The wage-earner funds issue is central to this program because it is the only way the Social Democrats can deal with Sweden's present economic difficulties in a progressive way. The events of May 1980 served to dramatize the crisis. SAF, the employers' federation, has argued for a number of years now that Swedes are living beyond their means and that consumption, public or private or both, would have to be cut to provide for adequate sources for new investment. Emboldened by the presence of a bourgeois government, SAF initially offered a wage increase of only 2 percent while inflation was running at 12 percent, and refused to budge on its offer. This precipitated a strike and lockout. Even the final settlement, which LO hailed as a victory, means a real wage loss for Swedish workers. Unless the Swedish economy is to be driven to ruin, consumption must be restrained in order to pay for capital accumulation. The question is, how are employees to be compensated? An individual share system, as proposed by the Conservative party, will not work since lower- and middle-income earners will sell their shares to increase their consumption level. This defeats the purpose of the plan, as would any scheme that attempts to compensate employees' wage restraint with another kind of consumption.[6]

I see only three choices that can increase the level of investment: (1) Reduce consumption and let the accumulated capital accrue to the capitalists. (2) Reduce consumption, put the formal title of the accumulated capital in the name of the employees, but let the capitalists retain control of capital. This might be done either by having an individual share plan in which the stocks could be sold after a period of time or by having a collective share

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plan in which the employees receive dividends on the stocks but not voting rights. This, however, is only a sham version of the first alternative. Since it attempts to compensate consumption restraint with another form of consumption, the consumption foregone must be much greater than the consumption received, even with large economic growth, if the plan is to generate new investment. (3) Reduce consumption and compensate employees with increasing control over the enterprise. This last alternative is the only viable option for social democracy.

This is not to say that the labor movement will win. The parliamentary commissions will report in 1982. These commissions, which contain representatives of the various parties and of the principally affected interest groups (in this case SAF and the trade unions), usually present unanimous recommendations. But that is not likely in this case. As in other cases where deep divisions of class interest are involved (for instance, the pension issue in the 1950s and the workers' control issue in the '70s), various parties and interest groups are likely to present different proposals. The Social Democrats and LO will almost certainly present some version of the third choice outlined above and SAF and the Conservatives some variety of the second choice, probably an individual share scheme with options to sell after a given period. TCO is the swing group. Its leadership favors the third option but does not have the membership with it. As of now, though, no public opinion polls have been taken on the most recent LO-Social Democratic plan, so we do not know how the change in the objectionable trade union ownership provision will change the picture. TCO can only give its wholehearted support to the LO-Social Democratic position if its members come around, which means that the labor movement faces a substantial educational task. The Liberals and the Center will not oppose a united TCO, at least not stridently. Under these conditions, in the 1982 election campaign, the issue could be an asset for the Social Democrats rather than a liability.

This outcome is possible but not the most likely. Among the alternatives acceptable to the labor movement, the most probable outcome is some modification of the plan in which the consumption restraint for economic control trade-off would be retained but the level of employee ownership and control (or just control) is limited to, say, 49 percent of the shares or board seats. Such an outcome would be a victory for social democracy, since such limits could easily be changed later.

WHAT DOES the new Swedish model say about the prospects of social democracy and socialism elsewhere? It might be argued that the economic stagnation of the West universalizes the situation that has led Swedish social democracy to propose wage-earner funds: the only way out of the current crisis that does not ask employees to accept rollbacks for the capitalists' benefit is to develop some system of collective capital accumulation.

Such an argument has both its negative and positive sides. On the one hand, it provides the left with a clear rationale for raising the issue of collective ownership and control as a response to immediate, pressing problems of the economies of advanced capitalist societies, such as the need for new sources of capital accumulation. In Britain, a wage-earner fund proposal would appear to be an ideal solution to get the Labour party, and the country, out of the current impasse. In the U.S. the pension-fund issue would be a vehicle for raising the question of increased democratic ownership and control. Yet, the British labor movement is weaker and the American very much weaker than is the Swedish labor movement. Thus in America and in Britain demands for democratic ownership and control are less likely to be successful. But because economic stagnation makes redistribution through public-sector expansion much more difficult, questions of ownership and control should probably not be delayed—though in the U.S. a delay might be desirable for strategic reasons, given the weakness of American labor and the left. Recapitulation of the Swedish path is not an option

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for America in the current period. But this should not be cause for pessimism.

Perhaps we can learn from Swedish social democracy's mistakes as well as from its success. Though organized labor and the left will have to compromise with capital as long as most production is privately owned and controlled, perhaps by anticipating the contradictory results of that compromise we can avoid their worst aspects.

Notes

[1] See, for example, R. Emmett Tyrell, *The Future That Does Not Work* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977).

[2] Alan Wolfe, "Has Social Democracy a Future?" *Comparative Politics*, October 1978.

[3] In Sweden, "the labor movement" consists of the Social Democratic party and LO (the confederation of blue-collar unions). These two often are called "two branches of the same tree." The white-collar unions in the TCO (and the TCO itself) are not part of "the labor movement" (though they are part of "the trade-union movement"), because white-collar employees are not *arbetare* (like the German *Arbeiter*). The word *arbetare*, in the singular, is translated as "worker" or "laborer." (There is a definite difference between a white-collar employee and an *arbetare*.) The translation for the word *arbetarrorelsen* is "labor movement."

[4] Korpi's side of this debate is summarized in "Social Democracy and Welfare Capitalism," *Acta Sociologica* 21 (1978): 97-112. See also his book *The Working Class in Welfare Capitalism* (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[5] A summary of this analysis will appear in *Comparative Political Studies*, Summer 1981.

[6] One reason Heilbroner misestimates the probable effects of the plan is that he does not recognize the centrality of the creation of new sources of capital accumulation to the plan. The shares accruing to the funds are new issues, in effect, forced reinvestment of a portion of the profits. In the Swedish debate, the emphasis has shifted from wage policy to capital formation since the publication of the original Meidner proposal, which is the only version of the plan available in English. This shift was stressed by Meidner when I interviewed him at the Eurosocialism Conference last December, but the change was also apparent in public statements by Meidner and Palme at the conference. □

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Boris Souvarine

Last Conversations with Isaac Babel

While Lenin was still alive, Soviet writers and artists found it quite easy to obtain permission and the means to go to the West and stay for a few weeks or even longer. As Napoleon said to Savary, who succeeded Fouché as head of his political police: "Treat literary men well. . . . They're useful." The early Communist government followed that advice, although its leaders had never heard of it. Lenin advised Gorky to go and "have himself treated in Europe," wishing thereby to be rid of the writer's humanitarian importunings. And the novelist Boris Pilnyak was able to travel as far as America and Japan.

Under Stalin's regime, this state of affairs continued for a few years. For then Stalin fancied himself as a patron of literature and the arts. Thus he responded favorably to Mikhail Bulgakov's request for permission to produce a play by that gifted author. So, too, he granted a passport to Eugene Zamiatin, who was to live permanently in France. And so on. . . . This happy state of affairs lasted for a little while.

In the late 1920s, one would see "the Russians" arrive in Paris. One glimpsed them in Montparnasse cafés and in the studios of such artists as Annenkov, Puni, and Zadkine. For six years in a row, Mayakovsky made his meteoric appearances in France, and Sergei Esenin traveled through the country with Isadora Duncan, en route to America. In this way, a certain "milieu" was created—transient but friendly, agreeable, cultivated, amusing. And so it came about that I could frequently see Zamiatin, Y. P. Polonsky, Kussikov, Mansurov, Niculin, to mention a few of the visitors. And so it happened, too, that I struck up a friendship with Babel.

Isaac Emanuilovich Babel was devoted to his mother and to his sister (later the wife of Dr. Shaposhnikov). Both women had been living in Brussels—his mother since 1924, his sister since 1926. He was devoted, too, to his wife, Eugenia Borisovna, who came to Paris in 1925, resolved to remain there, and to his little daughter, Natalie, born in Paris in 1929. Babel never missed an opportunity to visit his family and spend time in their company. In 1927-28, he lived for almost a year in "the West." After that long stay, however, he was unable to return until 1932, having had to allay the suspicions of the police, who scented his "wrong ideas," for after the publication of *Red Cavalry*, which made him famous, he had produced almost nothing—only a few short stories in 1932, which were the price of his passport.

In the course of our long conversations—at his home, at my home, in a café, in the streets, even in the Métro—it had never occurred to me to take any notes. (In those days I had the memory of an elephant.) We used to talk, above all, about Soviet literature and politics. But I also greatly enjoyed his comments about Paris, about France; his attentive, amused observer's eye detected things that a seasoned old Parisian like me no longer noticed but that sparked droll, pertinent ideas in him. In the course of three conversations in 1932, however, I felt I should keep some record of his remarks. I was then writing a book about Stalin, and it seemed to me useful to jot down comments about the state of Communist affairs at the time. In 1935, during Babel's last stay in France, I again jotted down a few notes. . . .

Books have their destiny, and so do manuscripts. In occupied France, during 1940-41, the Gestapo and the GPU joined in a touch-

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ing collaboration; they ransacked my home, my library, and my files; but they missed the notes about Babel, which were in the country with friends who had offered me hospitality. Inevitably lacking in my notes are the play of facial expressions, the changes of voice, the eloquent glance, the inimitable accent, all of which I see and hear again as I reread my notes but which cannot be conveyed. . . .

Tuesday, October 18, 1932

To start off, knowing Babel's connections with Gorky, Voroshilov, and other relatively well-informed big wheels, I questioned him about Stalin, of course. Babel was indebted to Gorky, for Gorky had supported his literary beginnings and given him helpful advice. In 1924 and 1928, when Budyonny indulged publicly in hostile, vulgar comments about *Red Cavalry* and its author, Gorky had come warmly to Babel's defense in the press, as had Voroshilov in military circles. This explains their excellent relations.

Here is a résumé of his reply to my first question; it was offered in short sentences and in a phlegmatic tone of voice, with my observations inserted in-between, in brackets.

BABEL: Stalin isolates himself. He goes for whole days seeing no one. He strides up and down his office, smoking his pipe. He thinks. Now and then, he telephones a subordinate. He gives orders.

He left Moscow to spend three months in the Caucasus. In his absence, Kaganovich is the *khozyain* [boss]. . . . Do you know what people were whispering when Stalin went off, leaving the country's affairs, the economy especially, in a lamentable state? *Nasral i uiekhal*. . . .

[I did not know the meaning of the first of these Russian words, which did not appear in my grammar or dictionary. Babel translated for my benefit: "He shat everywhere and he left."]

BABEL: Stalin wants people to exceed what he says he wants. He does not like to be too precise in his orders. He would prefer to be understood by a hint. He reserves the possibility of disowning a clumsy or even an irreproachable subordinate in the event of failure. In this way, he evades responsibility. He is sober, but he likes to get his guests drunk to see how they handle hard liquor and to make them talk in that state.

[In the memoirs Khrushchev published 40 years later,[1] he fully confirms what Babel told me about Stalin's method of leading his guests on to talk unrestrainedly by making them drunk. . . .]

BABEL: Stalin loves the Moscow Arts Theater and the Ballet. He goes often. He receives in his box, summons members of the Politburo there. He is bored with his usual entourage. And so he was happy to find a captivating conversationalist in Gorky. He speaks very slowly, weighs every word for five minutes. . . .

B.S.: Talk to me about Gorky.

BABEL: A remarkable personality in various respects. His memory is prodigious. His knowledge of contemporary affairs is varied and vast.

B.S.: You mentioned Kaganovich a moment ago.

BABEL: A hard worker. Quick to catch on. In addition to all his official responsibilities, he is now the censor for the Arts Theater and for two others.

B.S.: What's happening with Pyatakov [assistant commissar for heavy industries]?

BABEL: He drinks . . .

B.S.: And Preobrazhensky?

BABEL: Drinks . . .

B.S.: And Serebriakov?

BABEL: Drinks . . .

[I am deeply dismayed. My friend Preobrazhensky, the incarnation of the Sovietized Marxist, *drinks*. . . . Babel has pronounced the word *piett* in a tone that leaves no room for hope. And my friend Serebriakov, a former worker from the Urals, party secretary before Stalin—he also drinks. . . . Like Pyatakov. . . . Their *sui generis* Marxism, which would have made Marx snicker, has given way to vodka and despair.]

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[1] *Khrushchev Remembers* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970).

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B.S.: The suppression of the RAPP[2]—I suppose it is Gorky who has used his influence to bring that about?

BABEL: You are wrong. Stalin decides all by himself, on his own initiative. For two weeks, he had Averbach, and Bezymensky—*tutti quanti*—come to his rooms, and he made them talk. Then he concluded: nothing to be done with these people. He put his resolution before the Politburo immediately. Nobody cavilled. . . .

[This said, Babel becomes animated, like someone about to relate a juicy tidbit.]

BABEL: This is how Stalin proceeds. He invites several comrades, he pours them drinks, fills a big glass with vodka or Caucasian brandy, and offers it—for example, to Averbach—saying, "Drink!" Averbach is disconcerted, and stammers, "But Comrade Stalin . . . it's . . . I don't drink anything alcoholic. . . ." Stalin, imperiously: "Drink! What, you don't want to drink?" Averbach, intimidated: "But Comrade Stalin . . . you understand . . . I can't. . . ." Stalin, furious: "Drink! What? You refuse to drink!" [To imitate Stalin, Babel tries to assume an ugly, terrifying manner; he speaks forcefully almost shouting.] Stalin: "Drink! You still refuse to drink! Eh? You're afraid! You-are-a-fraid-to-talk!!!"

[Averbach, nephew of the Chekist chief Yagoda and secretary of the RAPP, was one of the worst persecutors of gifted writers; he was executed shortly after this, like his uncle, and like the majority of the pseudo-proletarian hacks.]

B.S.: The papers reported recently that Yaroslavasky has fallen into disgrace. What happened there?

BABEL: His dismissal was cause for widespread satisfaction.

[Babel says no more. My question remains unanswered. But then, I no longer know why nor remember by what transition, Babel begins to talk about a certain Guguel, a stranger to politics and literature whose name I did not even know.]

[2] The Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, dissolved in 1932. — Trans.

BABEL: This Guguel is a typical Soviet construction engineer. He is in charge of the Magnitogorsk works. He has a direct telephone line to Moscow. At night he talks with his wife, with Stalin. He has a private plane at his disposal. . . .

[This digression reflects Babel's lively curiosity about new phenomena in Soviet Russia that are related to the brutal execution of the Five Year Plans. He was interested particularly in anomalies, in bizarre facts. In 1932, the new type of Soviet construction engineer was something unusual. There seemed to be a discernible touch of both admiration and astonishment in Babel's remarks, such as one finds in some of his stories in *Red Cavalry*.]

Friday, October 21, 1932

All Communist propaganda, both domestic and worldwide, used to evoke the danger of an imperialist war posed by France, England, and their allies; never by Germany. Only the Western democracies, and the Little Entente, were, by definition, the enemies of "the Homeland of Socialism." It was natural, then, to turn the conversation to the eventuality of such a war, and to the Red Army and its leaders. I mention Tukhachevsky, who has recently been promoted.[3]

BABEL: He was promoted despite the stubborn opposition of Klim [Klementi Voroshilov]. A heavy drinker. And a *babnik* [womanizer]; four or five women in Leningrad, and as many apartments. . . . Party member, but only for the sake of appearances. He's a scientific military man. The heroes of the civil war are in disrepute. We are in the period of the scientifics. Two outstanding leaders: Putna, Fedko. That's all. In case of war, one counts on the regimental commanders. All of them go through Germany [that is, through Germany's military academies].

[Putna, a former Trotskyite, was Soviet military attaché in London before he perished, along with thousands of high-ranking officers, in the purge of Red Army cadres that

[3] To Marshal of the Soviet Union. — Trans.

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Stalin began in 1937. I listen avidly to Babel, for I know that he is very well informed about Army matters because Army leaders, except for Budyonny, think highly of him and invite him every year to their big maneuvers.]

B.S.: Blücher?

BABEL: He is rather discredited by the Manchurian campaign. Also, he's ill. Cancer, probably.

B.S.: And your friend Budyonny?

BABEL: No longer exists, He's subdued. Killed his wife and married a middle-class woman. Now he's afraid of running into trouble. And Stalin's got him with some messy trouble. You know, Stalin doesn't care for spotless life stories. . . .

B.S.: Budyonny killed his wife?

BABEL: Yes, killed her.

B.S. [naively]: Why?

BABEL: He accused her of Trotskyism.

[Babel pronounced the word *ubil* (killed) with a detached air, looking at me indulgently, as if to say: That surprises you? At home, these things happen. . . . Thirty years after this conversation, an article, entitled "The Death of Alliluyeva" (Stalin's wife) in *Na Rubeje* (no. 5, Paris, September 1952) fully confirmed what Babel had told me. Briefly: after Alliluyeva's sudden death, all sorts of rumors circulated about "mysteries" surrounding her demise; it was associated with the death of Budyonny's wife in November 1927, which occurred shortly after Trotsky was arrested. Budyonny's wife was buried without an autopsy the day after her "suicide." Budyonny related how they had had an argument because she was indignant about Trotsky's arrest. He had accused his wife of Trotskyism, and claimed that he had merely upbraided her before her "suicide."]

B.S.: And Klim?

BABEL: Estimable. He's lost his partisan mentality. [In Russian, the word "partisan" is equivalent to guerrilla.] Except for Tukhachevsky's promotion, he's always in agreement with Stalin.

[Babel's first words about Klim displeased me, but I report what he said. I could not abide Voroshilov, whose abject role in the assassination of Tukhachevsky and his entire family and in the massacre of thousands of officers in 1937 proved that I was not wrong.]

B.S.: What's being said about a war?

BABEL: They're not ready. Especially in the Chelyabinsk factory.[4] The Army is ready, the peasant countryside is not.

B.S.: Do you know anything about Mrachkovsky?

BABEL: He has built a strategic railroad in Turkestan. He's now building another one, top secret, in the Far East, in the taiga. He holds the right of life and death over the workers. Thousands of men go under.

B.S.: And what are people saying about Trotsky?

BABEL: Very popular, even among the peasants. Because he's a leader, a hero. He created a bad impression with the pieces he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph* and with his memoirs. But generally people esteem him *because he doesn't give in.* [Babel's tone strongly underscores these words.] In the event of war or a crisis, the ex-Trotskyites would call for his return.

B.S.: Have you any idea of the size of the political repression?

BABEL: About 10,000 Trotskyites have been deported or imprisoned. Now there are maybe 1,500 or 2,000 left. The total number of all the deportees must be around 3 million.

[The reader will bear in mind that this conversation took place in 1932. It was especially after the assassination of Kirov, ordered by Stalin in 1934, that the mass deportations and the massacres of the innocents in series assumed fantastic proportions.]

B.S.: (Mindful of the book in progress): Let's get back to Stalin.

BABEL: He's short of men. He makes use of the ones he can get something out of. You know the kind of tests he puts people to: he invites someone and makes him drink a whole bottle of vodka or Caucasian brandy . . . . Recently, he's decided to be close-

[4] A major metallurgical and industrial center. Babel's singular "factory" may refer to several plants forming a single unit, the Metalurgicheski Gorodok, or Metallurgical Town. — Trans.

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mouthed, so as to avoid giving any grounds for post-factum criticism, and to dominate his associates better by making people worry about what he is really thinking, about his true intentions. This way, he can always take it out on subordinates who are guilty of having skewed the line, and he keeps the option of ratifying or disclaiming what has been done.

[Some allusion to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, I no longer know in what context, provokes the following comment.]

BABEL: The *Narkomindiel* personnel merely carries out the Politburo's instructions. Litvinov, Krestinsky and company don't count.

B.S.: Why was Unschlicht sacked?

BABEL: Stalin then had enough of him.

B.S.: And Semashko?[5]

BABEL: The same.

B.S.: And Lunacharsky?

BABEL: Likewise.

[I forget how the name of Budyonny comes up again. Babel tells me about a Dumienko episode, a person whom Trotsky proposed to have shot. "Budyonny," Babel says, "is always on the side of the strongest." The case has faded from my mind. But again à propos of Budyonny's aggressive denigration of Babel, the latter says to me, with a broad smile, "I've had some unexpected defenders—Kalinin, and Manuilsky, for example." This leads me to inquire about Manuilsky.]

BABEL: Decent.

[This is not my opinion, for I know this slippery rascal too well. However, I quote . . . . Our conversation ends.[6] As I accompany him to the door, I ask, as I have had occasion to do many times with Babel and with others—]

B.S.: In a word, no change in sight?

BABEL: War.

B.S.: And in that eventuality, who would be slated to assume supreme command?

BABEL: Putna.

[The reader will understand what importance I attach to this reply, since I know that Babel is offering not a personal opinion but the view of the military leaders with whom he associates, among others that of his friend from Kiev, General Yakir. And again I must remind the reader that these remarks were exchanged in 1932.]

Sunday, October 23, 1932

Once again, we talk about Stalin. How is one to avoid it? By way of illustrating the personality of the monster, Babel relates a Soviet "anecdote" that is repeated endlessly to the rueful delight of Muscovites. I have heard it before, but want to hear it told à la Babel.

BABEL: Stalin, furious with Krupskaya [Lenin's widow] because he knows her hostile feelings for both his person and his policies, summons her to rake her over the coals, and he threatens her: "You've not done with your opposition? If it goes on, I'll name Artiukhina the widow of Lenin!"

[This ferocious joke was invented by a clever opposition. It spread abroad, and some American "Sovietologists" took it seriously, actually believing that Stalin really wanted to enshrine another Leninian widow. To this end, they suggested some well-known female personalities, heightening thereby the incongruity of it all since what added the fillip to the anecdote was Artiukhina's physique. . . .

Then, by way of throwing more light on "the genial secretary," Babel tells me about the case of an important official, a member of the College of *Narkomnats* (Commissariat of Nationalities), culpable of I no longer know what. Decision of the Politburo: to dismiss him from said College and Control Commission, and to recommend his expulsion from the party. Stalin calls him in, spells out his transgressions, takes back from him, one by one, his membership cards in the above-named organizations, and brusquely sends him packing. But as the man—broken,

[5] Both Semashko and Lunacharsky were People's Commissars. — Trans.

[6] After Souvarine has also inquired about others they both knew. — Trans.

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ruined, pitiable—is nearing the door, Stalin calls him back: "Give me your card to the Kremlin dining room!"

And Babel looks at me with a sarcastic air, as much as to say, How about that? Some character! He thinks of everything. . . .]

B.S.: In your opinion, who would write the best book about Stalin?

BABEL: Gorky.

B.S.: And who is the best informed about him?

BABEL: Yagoda.

B.S.: In Bukharin's famous conversation with Kamenev [see *Dissent*, Winter 1979], which the Trotskyites reported in 1929, Bukharin says that Stalin is lazy.

BABEL: No more. He works hard. He's even worn out by the growing burdens he takes upon himself. . . .

II

Babel was able to return "to Europe" in 1933. He spent some time in Italy, staying with Gorky, then in Paris and Brussels with his family, and he returned to Moscow in September. The following year, in August, the Union of Soviet Writers held its first congress. The Union had been officially created by the government when Stalin suppressed the RAPP with one stroke of the pen. At this first congress, the antiphrastic term "Socialist Realism" was ruled obligatory; it now is attributed to Zhdanov, but he was merely Stalin's servile tool. . . .

Membership in this state- and police-controlled union was obligatory for Babel as it was for Pasternak and other heretics, their private convictions notwithstanding. Babel was not free to abstain from participation in the congress, since he was already suspected of "wrong thinking"; under a regime of spiritual terrorism, silence is the equivalent of confession. Why was he not publishing anything? At that time a man like him could neither express himself freely nor had he the right to be silent.

Babel owed it to himself, owed it to the GPU, to appear on the platform at the congress. Born wily, he got out of his dilemma in virtuoso style, delivering a well-turned speech that committed him to nothing and offered nothing for his perplexed and disappointed fellow-members to seize upon. He said, for example: "I have so much respect for the reader that I am dumb. . . . In the matter of silence . . . I have become a past master in the art. . . ."[7] This did not dissipate the mistrust that weighed on him, however, for people did not know what he truly thought. And so he was not appointed to the Soviet delegation sent to Paris in 1935 to "the Congress of Writers for the Defense of Peace and Culture."

At that point, something quite out of the ordinary happened: some writers of repute who were already in Paris sent telegrams to Moscow calling for Babel's participation. With the publication of *Red Cavalry* in French in 1928, Babel's reputation in France was made—not with the general public, but in intellectual circles concerned with questions of socialism. In 1931, three more stories had been published in a little magazine (*Les Humbles*, no. 5).

In a word, the reasons for Babel's absence from the 1935 congress were not understood in France. At the time, Stalinist despotism had not yet reached its paroxysm. And, in extremis, Babel obtained an exit visa for the last time.

Summer, 1935

Isaac Babel arrived just as the sessions opened. Once again we had time to talk together about our mutual concerns. . . . My book on Stalin was finished by then, and I no longer thought to take detailed notes as in 1932. However, I scribbled a few points of reference that allow me to round out the preceding account. . . .

B.S.: Do you think that at home there are new literary works of merit that the political situation prevents from being published?

BABEL: Yes! With the GPU. . . .

B.S.: How so?

BABEL: When they arrest an intellectual

[7] This appears in Lionel Trilling's Introduction to Babel's *Collected* Stories.

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and put him in jail, they given him paper and pencil and tell him, Write!

[These conditions could not last for long, because the countless arrests that followed were to pack the prisons with unfortunates unable to move, ergo unable to write.]

B.S.: And you? Are you writing for the better days ahead?

BABEL (his glance full of malice): Of course! I'm writing a book about horses.

B.S.: Horses?

BABEL: Yes. Since one can't write about people anymore, I am writing about horses.

[We speak of Stalin—for a change! In November 1932, the despot's wife, Nadiejda Alliluyeva, had "committed suicide." The official version attributed her death to "appendicitis," but no one believed it, knowing that all information from Stalinist sources was untrue. Rather, it was in the range of probabilities that Stalin would have driven his wife to suicide. Later, it was learned that the version current among informed circles in Moscow was that the murder was analogous to the one Budyonny had committed. And subsequently, on the basis of accumulating clues and testimony, it was no longer a matter of doubt that Stalin had killed his wife, as Budyonny had killed his, on the heels of an argument. As he had Gorky poisoned. . . . As he had ordered the murder of Kirov, his "best friend," to use the words of his daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva. And as he had caused the death of Mdivani and Enukidze, the companions of his youth, and of his close comrade Ordjonikidze, another "suicide." And many others. . . .

In my book about Stalin, which was finished in 1935, on the strength of what information was then available I conceded the suicide of Alliluyeva, the natural death of Gorky, and the assassination of Kirov by a fanatic—which goes to prove that I was not trying to blacken the picture. In later years and in the light of data received after the war, I had to revise my views and affirm Stalin's personal, immediate guilt in these tragedies. . . .

Babel tells me that at the time of Alliluyeva's funeral, thousands of Chekists were posted along the streets leading from the Kremlin to the cemetery of the Monastery of the Virgins, and on the roofs of all the houses, and that all the windows were ordered shut. (I no longer know who told me that Stalin left the funeral procession en route and returned home.) Babel describes Stalin after his domestic drama as more solitary, gloomy, and closed-off than ever , and he adds—]

BABEL: A woman had to be got for him. It wasn't easy. Finally, they found Rosa Kaganovich for him. . . .

B.S.: Why not so easy?

BABEL: (Hesitating, as if reaching for and weighing his words): Ah, well . . . because . . . you see . . . well, in a word, it-was-a-mat-ter-of-sleeping-with-him!

[He assumed an appalled air, and his eyes widened with horror at the idea of Rosa Kaganovich being handed over to the Minotaur of the Kremlin. The grisly vision made an impression on me, too, and for a moment we were silent, then both broke into long, nervous laughter that made us feel better. . . .]

The summer of 1935 is very warm. I go to the Babels' house in Plessis-Robinson. Eugenia Borisovna (Zhenye to her friends) lived with her daughter in a small house on the rue de l'Etang-s'il-pleut. . . .

Natalie Parain, the wife of my friend Brice Parain, is paying a neighborly call, and the two ladies are chatting in Russian. Babel, sprawled out in an armchair, is resting; he is smiling beatifically, but sometimes a shadow seems to pass over his face. One can imagine the thoughts that are passing through his mind on the eve of his return to his country.

Suddenly, Tatiana, the Parains' daughter, and Natalie, the Babels' daughter, burst upon the scene, laughing, breathless, red-faced, noisy. They are about the same age. They've come for a moment's respite. The mothers attempt to quiet them, but the little girls pay no head. Babel contemplates his small daughter with intense curiosity: she astonishes and amuses him extremely. He

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likes to call her "Makhno," which was the name of the Ukrainian anarchist from Gulai-Polie who had made so much trouble for Denikin's White and Trotsky's Red Russians. For Babel, the name "Makhno" means intrepid ardor, a combative temperament. Suddenly, Tania and Natasha, as if propelled by a spring, take off, yelping as they run. Babel shakes his had understandingly; his face is entirely relaxed. We then go out for a stroll. . . .

I try to hide my apprehension, my inner emotion at the idea that, this time, Babel will surely be leaving forever. For this is 1935, all our information from Moscow is disturbing, and we have no hope. The NEP has been finished and done with since 1930. We know that the collectivization of agriculture has been carried out with unparalleled brutality and that its victims must be counted in the millions. There can be no doubt: Stalin will stop at nothing.

Sergei Esenin's suicide in 1925 was followed by that of Mayakovsky, who took his life in 1930, both men overcome by disgust and despair.[8] We know about the fate of Pilnyak, Mandelstam, and many others. The partisans of Trotsky—and not only they—are mercilessly hunted down. Kirov's assassination in 1934 was followed by countless arrests and deportations and frightful reprisals.

I am not one of those who advises Babel to remain in France. For I know his invariable reply to such well-meant suggestions: "I am a *Russian* writer, if I were not living *in* the Russian people I would stop being a writer, I would be like a fish out of water." I have heard him say this more than once.

My apprehensions deepened the next year. Gorky died on June 18, 1936: now Babel no longer had a well-placed protector, albeit one who had lost all influence over Stalin. And Gorky's death was followed by many others: "Look for whom the crime profits." Delivered of a "bitter" nuisance who was nonetheless his accomplice for several years, Stalin wreaked his vengeance without further restraint: Zinoviev and Kamenev were executed two months after Gorky, as were a number of their real or supposed partisans. It was becoming clear that Stalin was resolved to "liquidate" the party of Lenin in blood. He professed that only the dead do not talk and can no longer offend him.

III

In 1936, Ilya Ehrenburg, who moved easily between Moscow and Paris—too easily for him to be honest—arrived once again in France. Zhenye Babel made an appointment with him in St. Germain-des-Pres, to have at first-hand some word from her husband. Babel did write brief, sybilline letters from time to time to reassure his family; in them, curiously, he kept begging his wife to return to Russia, knowing that she would do nothing of the sort. Obviously, this was for the benefit of the censor, but it also served the needs of his own line of conduct. Like a good Stalinist, Ehrenburg treated Zhenye in the grossest way, and, in effect, said to her brutally: "Babel has another woman, you mean nothing to him anymore, it's finished between you." Zhenye left this boor and came to my home (I lived nearby) in tears, to seek comfort.

I consoled her as best I could, saying what one can say in such a situation: that Babel knew better than to expect her to return to Russia, especially not with a small daughter who should be brought up in the best possible

[8] "Letters to Alexander Kussikov" by Sergei Esenin appeared in *Contrat Social* (Paris, Dec. 1968), in Russian and French. Evoking Soviet Russia, the poet says that he has "absolutely no wish to return there." And that "if I were alone, if it were not for my sisters, I would send the whole business packing and take off for Africa or some other place." One reason, among others: "Now nothing is left of the revolution but some skunks and dopes. . . ."

See also, regarding Mayakovsky, *Paris, et poèmes divers: Mayakovski inconnu*, by Georges Annenkov (Paris, 1958). In Nice, the painter met the poet, who said to him: "I've stopped being a poet—" and broke off, sobbing. Then he whispered: "I am . . . a civil servant. . . ."—a euphemism so as not to say a domestic. Later, Annenkov recalls the memory of Vladimir Pyast, the poet who "hung himself with his suspenders"; and Velemir Khlebnikov, who "dies of hunger and without lodging"; of Marina Tsvetiayeva and André Sobol, who "committed suicide"; of Nicholas Gumiliov, Sergei Tretiakov, Adrian Protrovsky, Boris Pilnyak, Bruno Yasensky, who "were shot." — B.S.

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circumstances; that his letters were written in a tone of serenity so as not to worry his nearest and dearest, whom he loved, albeit with no illusion about his chances of seeing them again because he knew he was no longer able to leave Russia and no one could foresee the end of the present nightmare; that if he had entered into a liaison it was in the nature of things here below but clearly in no way altered his faithful feelings for his family, which had luckily found refuge in civilized countries; that Ehrenburg was a Stalinist, ergo a liar and a pig; and so forth. Zhenye was very intelligent, and courageous too. She had her responsibilities toward Natasha, who was seven years old at the time. Her inner strength helped her overcome this trial.

Much later, we learned what had happened. Babel had become friends, in 1932, with a cultivated young woman, Antonina Nicolayevna Pirojkova, an engineer by profession. Late in 1935 (the exact time is not known), they began to live together. In 1937, they had a child, a daughter, Lidya, whom Babel acknowledged as his. In *Babel: Recollections of His Contemporaries*, which appeared in Moscow in 1972, there is a photograph of Pirojkova: she is pretty, and looks modest and likable. So Babel had founded a new family, which, given the circumstances, was not extraordinary. He continued to write reassuring letters filled with apparent optimism about the state of Soviet affairs; with no allusions, of course, to what was going on in political and literary circles.

With the massacre of the people accused in the trials of Zinoviev and Kamenev (1936), of Pyatakov and Radek together with their alleged "accomplices" (1937), and then of Tukhachevsky, Putna, Yakir, and other generals and high-ranking cadres of the Red Army (1937), and finally the trial of Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, etc. (1938)—massacres that were accomplished by collective deportations—the terror was at its peak. . . .

Yet in Antonina Pirojkova's *Recollections* there is no hint of any such thing. Not a word about friends who were disappearing as if through a trap door; about Babel's literary colleagues; about military leaders whom he knew, not even General Yakir; not the slightest allusion to the millions of victims of the famine. Pirojkova was employed as an engineer in the construction of the Moscow subway; the working conditions were pitiless, and caused the death of many workers, but not one word about these unfortunate human beings.

In Pirojkova's *Recollections*, which chronicle their life together over seven years, everything is for the best. The couple experienced no difficulties of any kind whatever—about lodging, about food—in the city or in the country. . . . Babel was working, especially for the films (he was writing scenarios). He was granted a dacha in Peredelkino, the writers' village, where he was a neighbor of Pasternak. . . .

It was there that on May 15, 1939, Babel was arrested by the GPU and disappeard forever. Of this, too, not one word in the *Recollections* of Antonina Pirojkova. In line with Stalinist law, not one word anywhere. A silence of death fell over Babel, over his name, his memory, his works.

IV

Stalin died on March 5, 1953, fourteen years after Babel's disappearance. On February 25, 1956, Khrushchev delivered the secret report in which he began to unveil a tiny part of the crimes committed under Stalin. But on December 18, 1954, in great secret, Babel had been "rehabilitated" by his assassins in four curt lines that gave no explanation whatever but merely indicated that he had been convicted (of what?) on January 26, 1940. And a few years later, via listings in encyclopedias, the date of his death (what *kind* of death?) was revealed: March 17, 1941. Knowing the abominable treatment and procedures that Stalin's GPU used to break the morale and physical resistance of unfortunate people who had nothing to reproach themselves for, I cannot think without a shudder of the fate of Babel between May 1939, and March 1941. . . .

But after the purely formal "rehabilitation—which is to say, impurely formal—in 1957 one witnessed a literary pseudo-rehabilitation in

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the form of a re-issue of *Red Cavalry*, augmented by the *Odessa Tales*, a few short stories, and two play scripts (*Selected Works*, Moscow, 1957). This republication was sullied by a preface by Ehrenburg. Also, the censor had passed that way, witness the suppression of passages that mention Trotsky and of "indecent" phrases. A new edition of the *Selected Works*, enlarged by an "Autobiography," some articles, recollections, and letters, appeared in 1966. But what about Babel's other writings that were confiscated by Stalin's GPU, and preserved (or incinerated?) by the NKVD?

What about the novel on collectivization, *Belaya Krinitsa*, mentioned by Leo Labedz in *Survey*? Alexander Weissberg, physician and the author of *The Accused*, visited Babel in Moscow in 1932. Weissberg told me later that he had asked the writer, "Why aren't you writing anymore?" Babel replied, "Who tells you I'm not writing?" And he pointed to some ten bound volumes in his library. But they were typed manuscripts. Babel made some ironic comment about the fate of these texts if he were to risk proposing them for publication. What about those unpublished writings?

Several other works have been referred to here and there. Thus, the inevitable Ehrenburg (again), who for once was no doubt speaking the truth, revealed that Babel worked for a long time on a novel entitled "Kolya Topuz," the name of the protagonist, an ex-burglar made wiser by manual labor (*Literaturnoye Nasledstvo*, no. 70, p. 40, Moscow, 1963). It is clear that the GPU made a clean sweep of all these works.

V

The *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of April 28, 1956 mentioned that the secretary of the Writers' Union had named a "Commission for the literary heritage of Babel," to be headed by Konstantin Fedin. The commission included Ehrenburg, L. Leonov, L. Slavine, and Antonina Pirojkova. But it is the KGB that pulls the strings, and therefore we will have none of Babel's unpublished works (if they still survive) so long as the spirit of Stalinism prevails at the "summit" of the Soviet state.

Nor are we any closer to being informed about the circumstances surrounding the arrest and death of Babel. The liar Ehrenburg said that Babel was the victim of a "denunciation." This is nonsense, since denunciations were ordered by the GPU, which then acted upon them or ignored them, whichever suited its purpose. The Stalinist scribbler Konstantin Simonov had the cynicism to make it known that Babel was a Japanese spy (only), and that he expiated his misdeeds in a camp. . . .

In his "Autobiography," Babel writes that after being a soldier on the Russo-Rumanian front during World War I, he "served in the Cheka," a statement that elicited the reprobations of righteous persons who were poorly informed on this point. Even Zhenye Babel did not want to believe it, and she explained this "confession" as a kind of hoax. And in her book *Lonely Years*, their daughter reports that Zhenye called this "pure fabrication" on her husband's part, for he was given to the mystifying paradox. She was mistaken. In the land of the Soviets one does not trifle with one's autobiography, which is gone over with a fine-tooth-comb by professional censors. To belong to the Cheka, however, could imply various things.

For the general public, the word "Cheka" is associated with the Red terror, and it makes people think of the cellars of the Lubyanka, where condemned prisoners received a bullet in the neck. But this sense of the word has to do with only a very limited part of the functions of the organization, the full name of which, let us remember, was Extraordinary Pan-Russian Commission to Combat Counterrevolution and Sabotage—sabotage here including smuggling. It was at the time a kind of new, inflated ministry that recruited all sorts of people of undefined occupations to perform all sorts of auxiliary tasks. In that period, called by Lenin post factum "war communism"—a period of famine and suffering—the key word for most mortals in the city was the word *payok* (ration allowance).

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To have or not to have a *payok*, that was the whole question. A question of life or death. . . .

The Cheka, an entirely new organization, recruited a variety of personnel: new civil servants, secretaries, translators, bookkeepers, typists, messengers, copy clerks, and a lot of people who did nothing at all . . . but who were holders of a *payok*, which is to say, of the chance for survival. I suspect that Babel belonged to this last category. In any event, I can attest that he never fired a bullet into any neck.

In what circumstances was Babel judged guilty? In some cases, the official information attributes the sentences to this or that judicial, military, or civil agency. However, at the Twenty-second Party Congress, it was revealed that the death of the marshals and generals (Tukhachevsky, Putna, Yakir, etc.) had been decided by the Politburo. This is in the official stenographic notes. The alleged tribunal authorized to have functioned never existed; its pseudo-members and judges, who were named in the press, were shot in their turn. And here another ray of sinister light is projected on the procedure: Yezhov would submit to Stalin a list of the important persons to be arrested; Stalin sometimes crossed out this or that name; on a list of literary people, he crossed out one name, that of Lili Brik, saying: "Let's not touch the wife of Mayakovsky" (from an article by Roy Medvedev, in *Twentieth Century*, no. 2, p. 75, London, 1977). This was Soviet legality and justice.

Thus Babel's name could have appeared on a list presented to Stalin by Beria, the successor of Yezhov. . . .

Babel was neither an avowed dissident nor an open opponent. Like Alexander Blok, Sergei Esenin, André Biely, and many others, he had welcomed the "October Revolution" with great hope; none of them foresaw the mutation of the allegedly Soviet regime into a totalitarian barbarism armed with the full resources of modern technology. Babel never belonged to the Party Triumphant, but comported himself as a Soviet subject as loyal as possible.

For example, in an interview granted a Polish paper in 1930, he evoked an imaginary personage "greater than Lenin." This person, he said, founded an "International of oppressed people." This Gedali calls to all good people: "Good people unite!" . . . and the people shout: "Greetings to you, Gedali, creator of the Fourth International." The skeptical Babel saw no use in butting against an oak like a bull calf, as the Russian saying goes—the title, much later, of a very important book by Solzhenitsyn. Like the hero of a famous comedy, he hastened to laugh or to smile at everything for fear of being forced to weep. Always because, as a *Russian* writer, he could not live apart from the *Russian* people except at the cost of being like a fish out of water.

Babel was nevertheless doomed to the lamentable fate that so many innocent people suffered in different ways: the poet Kliuiev, the novelist Sologub (who died of privation), the stage designer Meyerhold, the historians Riazanov, Nevsky, Steklov, Platonov, and so many others, not to name the Stalinist writers also sent to the "butcher's knife." It is Roy Medvedev's merit to have sketched an initial but horrifying necrology.

Babel disappeared before giving a full account of himself. No one knows whether his "literary heritage" survives in a KGB file—if it does, perhaps our grandnephews and grandnieces will read it some day—or whether the GPU committed the manuscripts to the flames during the 1940 war.

The last text of Babel's that I was able to read appeared in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of December 31, 1938, written in response to a request from the paper for a statement for the New Year:

> I hope that in 1939 one may be able to buy in our bookshops, in complete and inexpensive editions, the artistic works of Leon Tolstoy. It is almost impossible to obtain them. This is a great lack. This deprivation is very great. I know this on my own account. Over the years, an irresistible admiration grows before the truth and beauty of these books.

You see with what skill Babel, who was morally obliged to voice in public a wish for

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the New Year, made the best of it without refusing to reply and while skirting any mention of the present. . . .

In vain. Less than five months after this wish concerning Tolstoy, he was condemned to lasting silence. And as he liked to say: "Without humor one could not live," so he, enclosed in a situation impervious to humor, had before long to stop living.

In Odessa, on the wall of the house Babel had lived in—17 Lenin Street, formerly Reschelevskaya Street—a commemorative plaque has been installed. In Ukrainian, it says: "In this house, the Soviet writer I. E. Babel lived until 1924. 1894-1941." That, as "rehabilitation" and, as funeral oration, is all.

This article is reprinted, in translation and somewhat abbreviated, from the French journal *Contrepoint*, Summer 1979, with the author's and the publisher's permission.

Translated from the French by ADRIENNE FOULKE □

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H. Brand

On the Economic Condition of American Workers

The economic and social situation of American workers is deteriorating. The purchasing power of their earnings is declining, and that decline is barely offset by family incomes bolstered by the earnings of a working wife. Workers' families thus must work harder if they are to maintain their living standards. The inadequacy of their earnings often arises from a disturbing trend that, though characteristic of the entire postwar period, has gathered force in recent years: the *marginalization* of a growing proportion of jobs.

Employment rose at extraordinarily high rates in the 1970s, but an overwhelming share of this rise occurred in low-wage industries, affording small or no benefits, and frequently offering only part-time or part-year schedules. At the same time, recessions as well as intractable "structural" industrial problems have raised unemployment to twice or three times the (not particularly low) rates that prevailed in the late 1960s. The experience of being unemployed (which extended to 16 percent of all persons who worked or looked for work in so relatively prosperous a year as 1978) has combined with the scarcity of good and steady jobs to restrain demands for wage increases that might compensate for losses in purchasing power caused by inflation. This condition has dampened worker militancy and thus has weakened the labor movement. It has, in particular, gravely depressed the economic situation of many blacks and other groups less able to defend their living standards than organized workers.

Thus the primacy that recent Administrations have assigned to fighting inflation and their abandonment of all pretense to attain full employment has resulted in lowering the price of labor. That this result is deliberate, not incidental, is evidenced by the recent Economic Reports of the President, which detail the effects of fiscal and monetary policies.

Changes in the industrial employment structure have vitally influenced the social and economic situation of America's workers, and I will briefly analyze these changes here. Industry and occupation tend to stratify workers by income (and hence status), although no pattern of stratification is permanent, and insecurity pervades the lives of most workers. Michael Piore and other labor economists have postulated a "dualism" of the labor market, dividing it into a "primary" and a "secondary" sector. The "primary" sector consists of jobs offering good pay, long tenure, and at least limited opportunities along skill (or career) ladders; the "secondary" sector of low-skill or unskilled, low-status jobs, usually of a dead-end kind, offering low pay, and little if any tenure.

Secondary-sector jobs do not appear to have unique attributes or to involve unique technologies. The "de-skilling" of jobs, for example, is a general phenomenon, as is the specialization of tasks. The segment of the labor force that fills secondary-sector jobs frequently has a less firm attachment to the labor market—or so it has been said—than the labor force in the primary sector. Yet it is debatable whether, for instance, teenagers would not often rather work full time than attend school full time; or whether, if adequate child-care arrangements were available or jobs were located in their neighborhoods, women would not rather have stable employment outside the home.

The extent to which primary-sector employment contracts and secondary-sector employment expands, or *vice versa*, depends on economic conditions, the availability and size of a reserve army of workers, and the success of organized labor in "de-casualizing" employment without jeopardizing it. The concept of a labor-market dualism is very useful—but I regard it as an *economic* concept, not one that tells anything definitive about either job attributes or the characteristics of jobholders.

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Economic conditions have conspired to enlarge the secondary sector, particularly after the mid-'60s. Piore believes that the Vietnam War and, after 1973, the energy crisis have lessened business confidence and hence long-term investment commitments. Labor was therefore used more intensively, and the modernization and replacement of equipment was postponed. "[The] . . . patterns in unemployment, in long-term capital investment, and in productivity growth may be attributed to a tendency to tilt economic expansion disproportionately to the secondary sector" (*Unemployment and Inflation*, p. xxii). Factors more fundamental than uncertainty, however, appear to have caused this development, among them the decline in labor costs relative to the costs of capital (which includes producer durable equipment, private nonresidential structures, and fuel as an operating component of equipment).

According to Lester Thurow, average labor costs in the U.S. rose 2.7 percent a year between 1948 and the mid-'60s relative to cost of capital, and 2.9 percent when energy costs, which were then falling, are added to the cost of capital. Interest costs were rising moderately, but the relative advantage of capital was little affected.

In the '70s, however, the cost advantage turned in favor of labor. Its cost relative to that of capital *dropped* at an average annual rate of 4.2 percent. This drastic change in comparative costs was caused by the large number of new workers who were entering the labor force, in a political context (not referred to by Thurow) marked by a deliberately passive employment policy that was intended to restrain wage claims. Rising energy prices and interest rates also raised the cost of capital relative to the cost of labor.

Thurow's cost comparisons are intended to shed light upon the lag in productivity improvement in recent years (which is not an immediate concern here). They also show why, notwithstanding the fears often voiced about technological unemployment from the "automated factory," manufacturing jobs rose at a faster rate during the cyclical upswing of 1975-79 than during any other such upswing since the mid-1950s. Thurow's cost comparisons also strengthen Piore's argument that the economic expansions of the 1970s "tilted" toward secondary jobs.

The rise in secondary-sector employment is demonstrated in Table 1, showing the extent of full-time, year-round, and part-time employment in the major industrial sectors for 1978 (part-year schedules have been omitted). Construction, where seasonal work predominates but the incidence of casual labor is also high, as well as the retail trade and services show the lowest incidence of full-time, year-round jobs and the highest of part-time jobs. The marked pattern for working women suggests employers' preference for traditionally low-skilled or unskilled demographic groups who are willing to or under pressure of necessity will accept low wages. Let us also note that more than two-fifths of all full-time workers worked less than the full year in 1978, as did most part-time workers (those who work less than 35 hours a week). Moreover, while 67 percent of all nonfarm workers held full-time, year-round jobs, this average obscures the fact that only 58 percent of all male black workers held such jobs, and that young men of both races held mostly part-year, part-time jobs. While part-year or part-time employment is not always marginal work, this is usually what it means. It also means that unemployment here is more frequent, and that employers will capitalize on the availability of those labor-force groups—women, youths, poor blacks—that are most likely to gravitate toward such jobs. These jobs are shaped to require a minimum of skills, and so there is no need for the employer to invest in the worker's training. Hence that worker can be readily replaced.

Table 1

Percent of employed persons with full-time, year-round, or part-time jobs, by sex, and industry, 1978

INDUSTRY	MEN		WOMEN	
	Full-time year-round	*Part-time*	*Full-time, year-round*	*Part-time*
Total nonfarm . . .	67%	12%	44%	32%
Construction . . .	48	9	43	30
Manufacturing	75	4	55	10
Transport. & public utilities	76	7	63	19
Wholesale trade	76	7	58	20
Retail trade	52	28	27	51
Finance, insurance, real estate	75	11	60	18
Services	62	18	43	35
Public administration	83	6	58	21

Source: *Work Experience of the Population in 1978: Special Labor Force Report 236*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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Hourly earnings in the industries characterized by marginal work fall substantially below the average for all nonfarm employees: in 1979, the hourly wage in retailing averaged $4.53, or 26 percent below the nonfarm average of $6.16; in the service industries it averaged $5.36, or 13 percent below the nonfarm average. These averages, while indicative of general patterns, again mask important underlying tendencies. For example, in such service industries as nursing and personal care, the hourly wage was only $3.85 or 27 percent below the nonfarm average. These wage statistics are, moreover, reinforced by data on median annual earnings, compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The latest available data are for 1975, but the relationships they indicate undoubtedly continue to obtain. They show that retail workers earned but 62 percent of the annual average for all payroll workers outside government, and service workers 82 percent. The average earnings of black workers came to but 77 percent of those of white workers.

II

Industries characterized by secondary-sector labor markets have accounted for most of the growth in employment throughout the post-World War II period, most of all in the decade 1969-79. (See Table 2; the years selected there are cyclical peak years.) In the latest decade, the employment increase in retail trade and services represented more than half of the total employment increase; eating and drinking places and health services accounted for more than one-fifth of that increase. Also significant in terms of the present argument has been the rise of employment in the areas of finance, insurance, and real estate. Although here jobs are more likely to be full time and year-round, earnings in 1979 ran to only 86 percent of the nonfarm hourly average.

The greater increase of employment in the service-producing as against goods-producing industries should not obscure the intimate relation between service production and goods production, and both rose at about the same rate over the past two decades. All services are generated from a substratum of equipment and structures, or they are rendered over time by capital goods. Neither transportation nor health care nor most leisure activities are conceivable without those substrata. Furthermore, the service industries, like the goods-producing industries, have been marked by an ever more refined division of labor, which has been fostered by such developments as population shifts, the commercialization of household tasks, cost pressures, or technological changes and their administrative precipitates. The commercialization of household tasks, for example, is reflected in the proliferation of fast food chains and ready-to-eat foods. Cost pressures, in part at least, account for the growth of specialized advertising, computer, and janitorial services. All these, because of the cost pressures, can no longer be performed within the conventionally organized business firm. Technological changes in such disparate areas as medicine, communications, and accounting have fostered specialization and given rise to large staffs of technicians and administrators. None of these developments, however, can be said to have promoted nor are likely to promote a "service society." For, as mentioned earlier, they remain bound to goods production and, more fundamentally, to the process of capital accumulation.

A decline in the rate of capital accumulation since the mid-'60s has been widely noted, but considering the comparative strength in the growth of employment over the past decade, and considering the decline also in the light of the relation between service and goods production just discussed, a brief look at that decline is needed. For although, as Thurow has demonstrated, the cost

Table 2

Employment Trends in Three Decades, by Industry

	PERCENT CHANGE		
	1969-79	*1959-69*	*1948-59*
Total nonfarm	27%	32%	19%
Goods producing	9	19	9
Mining	15	-15	-26
Construction	30	19	37
Manufacturing	4	21	7
Service producing	37	40	26
Transport. & utilities	-10	11	-4
Trade	37	32	20
Retail	39	34	21
Finance, insur., real est.	41	38	42
Services	53	58	43
Fed. government	-18	24	20
State & local government	36	61	54

Source: *Employment and Earnings*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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of labor has progressively fallen in relation to the cost of capital, capital still remains necessary in order to employ labor; a rise in employment presupposes rising amounts of capital, albeit the rise of the former may be more rapid than the rise of the latter.

Leaving aside American investment abroad and the trade this has generated, the most striking example of a high rate of capital accumulation may be witnessed in the Southern states. In the years 1960-76, the stock of manufacturing plant and equipment in the South grew at an average annual rate of 5.3 percent, compared with 2.7 percent and 3.0 percent annually in the Northeastern and North Central states, and 3.8 percent in the country as a whole. In the 1970s, moreover, the difference in these growth rates became even greater in favor of the South. High rates of manufacturing investments, of course, generate high rates in the expansion of nonmanufacturing "infrastructures," such as utilities, transportation, and finance. It is noteworthy that the South benefited far more than other U.S. regions from federal funds that were funneled into investments of plant and equipment. The Southern states' share of military prime contracts, for example, increased from 11 percent to 25 percent of the national total between 1951 and 1976. On a per-capita basis, the increase in such contracts was 109 percent for the South, as against a decline of 30 percent for the Northeast and 46 percent for the North Central region.

The rate of employment in the South indeed has risen much faster than in the country as a whole. In the decade 1968-78, 40 percent of the rise in all U.S. jobs occurred in the South (although in 1968 the South had accounted for but 30 percent of all jobs). Most of this employment increase took place in service-producing industries and construction. It was fed by heavy immigration, and the combination of population increases and population shifts to urban centers represented an additional factor in spurring capital accumulation. This development has helped accelerate the expansion of a low-wage secondary workforce, and the center of gravity of this expansion now is in the South.

III

Underemployment in the spreading secondary-sector labor market, forced obsolescence of great industrial regions, heightened worker insecurity, and high unemployment rates (particularly regionally and locally), even in times of cyclical peak ctivity—all have contributed, in addition to inflation, to downward pressure on wages and salaries, and hence to the loss in purchasing power. Whether lagging productivity has also been a factor is at best unclear. Suffice it to note that labor productivity in manufacturing rose 2 percent per year in 1975-79, while real compensation per hour rose less than 1 percent a year. In the 1954-57 boom, a 2 percent per year productivity rise was associated with a 5.4 percent a year rise in hourly compensation (wages and fringe benefits). Thus I refrain from saying anything conclusive about the relation between real earnings and productivity over comparatively short periods.

In 1980, average hourly earnings before taxes and after adjusting for change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell to a 12-year low for nonfarm workers outside government. It might be argued that 1980, in contrast to 1968, was a "bad" year and that, more important, the composition of the workforce had shifted toward lower-paid service workers. But this in itself highlights an element of the deterioration in the economic position of American workers. To make my case more conservatively, I will compare average hourly earnings for 1979 and 1973, which were both cyclical peak years; I will also present a breakdown by major industrial sector (lack of space prevents anything more lengthy and refined).

Average hourly earnings rose substantially in current dollars between 1973 and 1979. The CPI, however, rose as much as or more than hourly earnings for all the industries shown in Table 3, except mining. Thus workers generally either

Table 3

Percent Changes in Average Hourly Wage Rates, by Industry, and in the *Consumer Price Index*, 1973-1979

Total nonfarm*	56%
Mining	81
Construction	45
Manufacturing	64
Transport. & utilities	63
Wholesale trade	57
Retail trade	56
Finance, insur., real estate	49
Services	54
Consumer Price Index	63

* Excludes government.

Source: *Employment and Earnings*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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barely maintained the level of their purchasing power or saw it reduced. Inasmuch as average weekly hours in 1979 ran considerably below 1973 (and lower still in 1980), *the purchasing power of weekly earnings was not maintained but reduced* (again except for mining). For example, in 1979, real before-tax weekly earnings of manufacturing workers declined 3 percent from 1978 levels, and ran 2 percent below 1973 levels. Construction workers' real weekly earnings dropped 4 percent from 1978, and were off 11 percent from 1973 levels.

The deterioration of workers' economic condition, illustrated by these figures, is further confirmed by comparing the changes in wages and benefits under collective bargaining contracts covering more than 5,000 workers. The annual rate of percent change over the life of contracts negotiated in 1979 averaged 6.7 percent for all nonfarm industries outside government, compared to 7.4 percent in 1969 or 8.4 percent in 1970—years with rates of inflation less than half to two-thirds as large as those in the late '70s. The abolition of the cost-of-living adjustment under the recently renegotiated Chrysler contract, moreover, sets an ominous precedent for the deliberate reduction in workers' living standards generally. The *New York Times* of January 25, 1981 reported that "In recent months, such companies as Armour, Conrail and Firestone, in addition to Chrysler and Uniroyal have won substantive changes in previously negotiated wages or work rules. International Harvester took a bitter and costly six-month strike last year to change its work rules and reduce labor costs."

Workers and their unions are increasingly on the defensive—a fact also evidenced by recent attacks in the press on wage differentials favoring unionized workers. There is, for example, an article by Charles L. Schultze in the *Wall Street Journal* (March 20, 1981), in which he points to the rising hourly wage differentials of workers in the coal, auto, steel, and some other industries—differentials that have risen from 19 percent above the all-manufacturing average in 1967 to 40 percent in 1980. It is, however, disingenuous to point to wage differentials in a setting where income inequality generally is incomparably more blatant than wage inequality. In 1978, the top 5 percent of American families received 15 percent of all income; they averaged $40,800, a sum nearly two times higher than median family incomes, and more than twice as high as the annual income of the average auto worker (which I estimate at $19,100 in 1978)—assuming that worker worked full time and 52 weeks that year.

The median income of a family headed by a full-time, year-round worker was $21,714 in 1978 and 17 percent above the "intermediate" BLS budget for a family of four (figured at $18,622 for 1978). The average size of the family of an employed family head was 3.5 persons, so that the difference between his family income and the "intermediate" BLS budget somewhat understates how well off his family actually was in terms of this quite stringent budget. I am altogether ignoring the income relation to the BLS's "higher" budget (figured at $27,420 for 1978), whose level was approached only by the median family incomes of professional and technical workers, and by managers and officials. Let us remember, "median income" means that half of these families had incomes below the indicated figures. My choice of families headed by full-time, year-round workers is deliberate: it underscores the income inadequacy of large strata of workers whose economic circumstances are usually believed to be favorable.

For example, one-fourth of the families headed by a semiskilled blue-collar worker working full time the year round had incomes of $15,000 or less in 1978; one-fourth of the families of clerical or secretarial workers on a similar work schedule had incomes of $13,000 or below; the lowest fourth of service worker families had an income of $11,000 or less. These incomes should be viewed in the perspective of the BLS's "lower" family budget of $11,546 for 1978. Let us also note that the income of families headed by a black worker with a full-time year-round job invariably averaged lower than the family income of his white counterpart. The lowest fourth of all black families headed by such a worker had at most $11,000 in income in 1978, which is 23 percent below the (at most) $17,000 of his white counterpart's family. It should be remembered that family income here includes the contribution of any second (or third, etc.) earner. Clearly, in a large number of cases, such contributions are not sufficient to bring incomes up to the norms implied by the BLS budgets.

Lack of space prevents me from calculating the proportion of all workers and their families who according to the data and in terms of the BLS "lower" budget suffer want. So I will briefly discuss the "Labor Market Hardship Index" developed by the National Commission on Employment and Unemployment Statistics to complement the official unemployment rate. This Index is

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based on a worker who is employed at least 40 weeks per year (indicating his firm "attachment" to the labor force) and a family income less than twice that at the official poverty line. On this basis, the Commission's Index shows that 10 percent of all workers fell into the hardship group in 1976 (the unemployment rate for that year averaged 7.7 percent). "Low earnings rather than unemployment or discouragement appeared to be the predominant factor contributing to hardship . . ." writes the Commission. Here again, the average masks significant detail. While for men the hardship index was 8.7 percent, for women it was 12.1 percent. For blacks, it just exceeded 24 percent, for whites, 8 percent. The Commission's definition of labor market attachment and family income adequacy is narrow, considering that a high proportion of men and women even of prime working age experience more than 12 weeks of unemployment in any given year; and that "twice the poverty level" just barely equals the BLS's lower family budget. The index of 10 percent, therefore, represents a most conservative statement of the extent of labor market hardship. And it does not account for hardship suffered by those who are outside the labor market.

IV

The economic condition of American workers, particularly of those who are not organized and whose incomes are in the bottom half or fourth of the earnings distribution, most likely will continue to deteriorate.

- The first and foremost reason for this deterioration is the relative weakness of the labor movement, its loss of political weight. Widespread unemployment has been cited as a factor in the trade unions' reluctance to strike for higher real earnings and improved job security. Although the rate of unemployment in the 1930s was much higher, the labor movement's militancy was far greater than it is today; for then labor was politically ascendant. Today the enormous layoffs in auto and rubber, the decline in steel jobs, and the shift of hitherto organized plants to "union free" locales have been sapping labor's strength. Furthermore, unions remain badly underrepresented in the most rapidly growing employment sectors: only 7 percent of all wholesale and retail workers, only 11 percent of all service workers, and 20 percent of all government workers are organized —compared to 45 percent of manufacturing and 75 percent of construction workers. Failure to organize the service industries on a much larger scale spells perpetuation of low-wage, low-skill, low-status jobs, the more so as immigrants, unable to find decent jobs at home, succeed in being hired as "cheap labor" here. This development cannot fail to threaten workers in the primary-job sector as well.

- Second, economic policy has increasingly turned against workers. The legislative gains upon which the labor movement had come to count have long ago ceased to materialize. The Humphrey-Hawkins Act, potentially a major improvement in the Employment Act of 1946, has been subverted into a license to fight inflation by inducing unemployment. It did not take a Republican administration to compel "a change in the behavior of wages and prices," so they would more promptly respond to official "demand restraint" (compel a reduction in wage claims and hence in price hikes or price levels). In the *Economic Report of the President, January 1981*, the Council of Economic Advisers of the outgoing Carter administration frankly admitted that in order to force such a response, "in 1980 . . . no fiscal stimulus was offered, and a restrictive monetary policy was maintained in the face of a weakening economy . . ." and, one might add, of an unemployment rate that came close to 8 percent. Although the last federal budget submitted by President Carter forecast an unemployment rate of, again, nearly 8 percent for 1981, no compensatory measures were proposed. Indeed, existing compensatory programs were to be curtailed (federally financed public service employment, for example, was to be cut by 7 percent in the current fiscal year, and the unemployment benefit program was to be scaled down). The so-called economic revitalization program would amount to tax relief mostly for those least in need of it. Clearly, the labor leadership's impact on this budget was nil, and labor's possible contribution to this major document of an Administration and the party it represented was considered irrelevant. The last budget and the last Economic Report of the Carter administration is not an insignificant gauge of how low labor's fortunes have sunk. Although these documents have now been superceded, they retain great weight as analyses and as programs.

- Third, and perhaps most immediately important, are the growing pressures to reduce wage levels. The Council of Economic Advisers, again writing in the most recent *Economic Report*, would "improve flexibility in labor markets through job training or other programs, *or which*

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reduce the downward rigidity of wages in the face of high unemployment. . . . [Greater] labor-market flexibility increases the spread with which restrictive demand policies translate into lower rates of inflation" (p. 196, emphasis added). In simple English, we create unemployment by depressing demand, then "cure" it by reducing wages. As a student of *Economic Reports* over many years, I have not encountered in any of them a passage so openly advocating wage cuts. The Council evinces far greater concern for capital than for labor, advocating policies that "raise the return on capital investment," although the statistics in the same *Report* show that the ratio of after-tax profits on stockholders' equity in manufacturing rose to a postwar high in 1979, and the ratio of after-tax profits on sales rose to its highest level since 1950. (Manufacturing here indicates the direction of the pertinent date for many nonmanufacturing industries.)

Most vulnerable to reduction is the minimum wage. It is subject to legislation, and therefore within the reach of key legislators unsympathetic to its objectives. In particular, it has long been proposed that the minimum wage paid to teen-agers be cut to some percentage of that paid to adults. Others have pressed for the abolition of the minimum wage altogether, since the "competitive edge" that would be extended to teen-agers by a subminimum could not long be confined to them. If it could, adult workers (who constitute roughly 70 percent of the 5.3 million workers earning the federal minimum wage—$3.35 since January '81) would become less competitive. The subminimum thus becomes the effective minimum wage.

I will not review the argument about the unemployment-reducing effects of the subminimum but merely say that when unemployment is kept high by public policy, a lower minimum wage for any group stimulates employee substitution instead of the creation of new jobs. Any subminimum of the broad kind now being proposed subverts the historical objectives, not merely of minimum-wage legislation but of hours legislation as well: more hours would have to be put into work in order to earn the same minimum. The objectives must be, first of all, the protection of those groups of workers who are least able to bargain effectively with employers, and therefore are subject to being underpaid. Women workers were the first such groups for whom minimum-wage protection was sought, because they often worked for wages far lower than those men were receiving for similar work. There is no fathomable reason why teen-agers should be in less need of such protection.

Furthermore, the wage floor established by minimum-wage legislation has provided indispensable bargaining leverage to unions in low-wage industries, such as textiles in the 1930s and hospitals in the '70s. Already, widespread violations of minimum-wage laws threaten the modest gains achieved by such unions, as well as the wage levels of low-paid workers generally. A subminimum wage would further jeopardize those gains and further undermine low wages. This development would be to the detriment of much of the wage structure; it must be strongly resisted.

- The first of the three reasons I have cited for the probable further deterioration in the economic condition of American workers is the shallow penetration of unions in the most rapidly expanding industries. Such shallowness stems in part from the fragmentation of these industries: there may indeed be growing *concentration* of firms, by expansion or by merger, but there is little *centralization* of final outputs and of workplaces. Furthermore, the workforce employed by these industries often lacks coherent, articulated interests arising out of economic pressures commonly shared by its members. "Subjective" factors such as this one may change, as unemployment (or disemployment) in the primary sector transforms the secondary-sector workforce and the perception of its interests.

- The second reason I cited is the increasing divergence between government policy—as it retreats from promoting full employment and the welfare state—and the interests of labor. Such divergence arises from the antagonism between the state and its planning impulses on the one hand, and America's capitalist private enterprise on the other. This antagonism is not merely rooted in the "invasions" of private property that government planning entails, but also in the fear of corporate business that democratic as opposed to business interests might dominate the planning process. The redistributive and regulatory functions of the state—challenged ever since they were legitimized in the 1930s, and implemented, to be sure, largely by inflationary government finance and collusion with the regulated industries—have been increasingly attacked by interested business groups. The outcome of this attack is not predictable; it depends on whether and to what extent labor and other democratic forces will rally and resist it.

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• The third reason is based on the inroads being made on labor's gains, of which the drive for a subminimum wage is symptomatic. These inroads are partly related to the course of economic policy, which has engendered the situation that facilitates them. But they are also related to the pressures exerted by international trade and investments. These, translated by the dollar exchange rate and monetary policy, expose American capitalism to international competition perhaps unprecedented in the magnitude of its challenge. To all this the living standards of American workers cannot remain immune, the less so as attempted remedies —such as modernization of the industrial plant— will be made at the expense of consumption. This situation will not be resolved in the interest of labor unless international agreements can be reached on all levels of economic activity, by states acting primarily in the interest of labor rather than of capital.

Such a prospect, however, is not in the offing.

March 15, 1981

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Martin Kilson

Politics and Identity Among Black Intellectuals

Intellectuals, whatever their national or ethnic origins, often have had to make hard choices between creative and political activity. This problem is particularly acute for black American intellectuals. In no generation have they escaped the simultaneous pulls of creative and political obligations. Given the racism of American society, conflicting obligations have proved most difficult to manage.

The problem is exacerbated by an imbalance of supply and demand. The supply of black intellectuals has always lagged behind the Afro-American community's enormous demands for them—demands that pull them in several directions at once. The majority of blacks, lacking the skills and resources for coping effectively with American life, demand of their intellectuals that they assume responsibilities often far removed from a given intellectual's training and creative interests, thereby turning him, as it were, into a jack-of-all-trades and master of none.

Racism, of course, victimizes the black intellectual as well as the average black. Racism ravages the hopes of all blacks. It's no surprise, then, that many blacks consider their intellectuals obligated to lead the anti-racist struggle.

Leadership Strategies Among Black Intellectuals

MOST AFRO-AMERICANS have always viewed their intellectuals' political commitment as a simple matter: battle racism, wherever and whenever required. For innovative Afro-American intellectuals, however, the task of defining a strategy for political commitment has always been particularly perplexing. To surrender to the simplicity of a political choice is never easy for intellectuals of any kind, given their general inclination to make distinctions. And this, of course, exacerbates the black intellectuals' dilemma.

Black intellectuals must choose from a variety of political and leadership strategies. Which strategy an individual selects depends upon numerous considerations, some intrinsic to a given intellectual pursuit, others stemming from social and political forces that operate in the society at large. Afro-American intellectuals have had a particularly difficult time in this regard.

Strategy I: Ignoring Politics• First, there is the strategy of ignoring or withdrawing from open political commitment—a choice rarely made by Afro-American intellectuals. Only a few have opted for this route over the past several generations—notably the poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar, the composer Duke Ellington, and the novelists Jean Toomer and Ann Petry. Those who make this choice are usually very talented, creative people who believe that fulfilling their potential—that their work in itself—is a contribution to the redemption of blacks in a racist society.

Most Afro-Americans, however, grant only marginal legitimacy, and begrudgingly at that, to this choice—though it does not prevent intellectuals from drawing on their ethnic, social, and historical background, as in fact Dunbar, Ellington, Toomer, and Petry have done. But for those who choose Strategy I this creative identification is seldom extended to political action; for they do not consider politics a central concern.

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Strategy II: Total Politicization • The second strategy—total politicization—has always been the most common for Afro-American intellectuals. Strategy II, unlike Strategy I, treats concerns intrinsic to one's intellectual calling and apart from the realm of politics as ephemeral, hence secondary to political obligations.

Intellectuals who choose Strategy II become the mere instruments of political circumstances. The works they produce are often incidental and seem indifferent to aesthetic techniques and values. Only artists and intellectuals possessed of exceptional creative powers—for instance, Pablo Neruda—will surmount this condition: few totally politicized intellectuals possess such powers. The basic generalization holds: intellectuals who choose Strategy II usually turn out to be run-of-the-mill, setting minimal creative and aesthetic goals for themselves. Such minimal goals enable Afro-American intellectuals committed to Strategy II to accept the special demands upon time and mind associated with political activism.

During the 1920s and the 1930s this situation prevailed among intellectuals who followed Marcus Garvey and his United Negro Improvement Association—popularly called the Back-to-Africa movement. J. A. Rogers, for example, had no significant personal intellectual goals, and so he immersed himself in the Garvey movement's daily propaganda work, producing pamphlets, articles, and books of great political value for the nationalist movement but of no intellectual consequence. More recently, the writer Imamu Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) has chosen to apply his talents to the nationalist mobilization of urban blacks, producing works that are strongly ideological but of little lasting creative worth.

Baraka is a fascinating case: by now he has followed several different strategies. In the 1950s to middle '60s, as Le Roi Jones, he was one of the few black intellectuals who participated in and helped define the literary movement of the "Beat Generation." As a Beat poet and novelist Baraka / Jones displayed signs of viable creativity. He was then somewhat apolitical, in regard to organizational ties, though not ideologically. His ethnic or racial ties in his Beat period identified him as a follower of what I call "the strategy of the Marginal Man"—independent of a priori ethnic and political obligations. He strengthened this identification by taking on the trappings of Marxist ideology and marrying a white woman. Later, Baraka discarded this strategy and defined himself in more totalistic political terms: he became a militant black separatist. Then, in 1976, he went through yet another permutation: he renounced black separatism and its Black Aesthetic movement, calling them racist and reactionary, proclaiming instead a return to Marxism and assuming again the Strategy of the Marginal Man.

Strategy II—the choice of total politicization—is the most common among Afro-American intellectuals, and those who choose it remain, on the whole, committed to it. The talents of most of these intellectuals are rather modest, and politically they often are neither astute nor effective, for they fail above all to face the complex dialectics of the black/white relation in American society. The tendency of politicized black intellectuals to speak of the Afro-Americans' status in separatist or ethnocentric terms inevitably conflicts with the actual interdependence of blacks and whites in American life. Effective solutions to American racism must reflect the reality of this interdependence, a reality that consistently defies the separatist perspective.[1]

Strategy III: The Marginal Man • To adhere to Strategy III is to divide one's intellectual energies between creative engagement and the demands of the ethnic group for political activism. Strategy III entails a heavier personal and emotional burden—even trauma—than either the apolitical or the politics-first choice, for it rests upon a fundamental ambivalence between the intellectual's private and public selves. There is a perpetual contest to salvage the intellectual's creative inspiration while also engaging in political involvement.

Thus the choice of our third strategy is infinitely more complex than the others, especially for the ethnic intellectual. The intel-

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lectual who selects Strategy II, for example, surrenders to ethnic claims, thereby achieving a ready acceptance, and sometimes fervent celebration, in his ethnic circles. But Strategy III, in the view of most ethnic associates, results in uncertainty about the intellectual's loyalty, thus causing tension. This is the reason: in order to control the use of his intellectual energy, the Strategy III intellectual defines for himself a marginal existence, living precariously between the ethnic milieu and his own intellectual turf. He dangles, as it were, at the boundaries of both his primary community and the wider world of creativity.

And so what David Riesman and others have called the identity of the "marginal man" has been widely characteristic of talented Afro-American intellectuals. It has been the choice of a variety of creative men and women—such as the critic Alain Locke, the playwright Lorraine Hansberry, the playwright and poet Baraka/Le Roi Jones, and the novelists James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Richard Wright. Wright, in many ways, is the most engaging figure in this group.

Richard Wright as Marginal Man

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, Richard Wright was deeply torn between his quest for viable literary creation and a gnawing drive to help blacks overcome their degradation in American society. In the 1930s, he resisted all the black nationalists' entreaties to commit his talents entirely to nationalist ends and chose instead to live as a marginal man.

The Communist movement became the arena for Wright's marginality. It enabled him, as no other available network could at the time, to take himself seriously as an intellectual and also—and even more important, perhaps—to fulfill his ethnic obligation beyond the boundaries of ethnicity. Doubtless, in the '20s, '30s, and '40s it was this favorable relation between marginality and ethnicity that, as Nathan Glazer would later suggest, rendered the Communist movement a popular haven for ethnic intellectuals.[2]

It was less the Communist party's politics that appealed to such people as Richard Wright than the CP as both a haven from and outlet for their *Angst* over discrimination and intense status discrepancy. The Communist frame then allowed Negro and Jewish intellectuals to maintain some distance from the parochialism of their ethnic milieus while still professing a political commitment that met at least one ethnic obligation—opposition to the American social system that discriminated against Jews, Negroes, Catholics, and other minorities. The marginal intellectual remained his own man and preserved his own creative life—so long as Communist politics did not require that he serve as scapegoat or victim.

In his later years, after World War II, Wright abandoned communism and moved progressively closer to black nationalism, though never in orthodox form. He never permitted his search for self-realization as a black man—a process that took him to West Africa in the 1950s—to eradicate his identity as a marginal intellectual.

Richard Wright sustained, until his death in 1960, most of the attributes that marked him as a marginal man. Witness his life abroad as an exile; his Marxist beliefs without party ties; his white American wife. His interracial marriage might seem peripheral in this context; but on closer observation it is basic.

Other black intellectuals who had opted for the Strategy of the Marginal Man had married white women in the period of black/white civil rights coalitions of the late '50s and early '60s but had abandoned their wives in the late '60s, the era of militant black solidarity. Not so Richard Wright. He held fast to his marriage—maintaining this symbol of marginality while immersing himself in greater black consciousness. He did so although, no doubt, it is particularly hard to hold fast to the condition of the marginal man while one's primary group is experiencing a passionate wave of ethnic militancy. Thus, in the late '60s and in the last decade, retreat from marginality has become quite common among black intellectuals. This new option for Africanizing their Afro-American ethnicity was accompanied by much ritualistic fanfare: Afro hair-

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styles, African dress, nationalist or separatist language. Only a few intellectuals who have a deep gut feeling and need for the elusive dialectics of the Marginal Man can persist in it as a condition for creative life. Richard Wright surely was one of them.

Cultural Nationalism as Bourgeois Affair

IN HIS FORMATIVE YEARS as a writer, in the late 1920s and the '30s, the young Richard Wright seems not to have thought much about Countee Cullen's searching question about his identity: "What is Africa to me?" In those years the New Negro movement, also called the Harlem Renaissance, was a prominent force for ethnic awareness among Afro-American intellectuals.[3] And so it is somewhat surprising that this movement's black consciousness—I shall call it hereafter "Afroness"—did not engage Richard Wright's attention and imagination. How are we to explain his seeming indifference to black cultural nationalism?

The explanation is partly a matter of definition. If we define "Afroness" specifically in terms of African-derived material, motifs, symbols, and allusions, then Richard Wright's work in his formative years was void of African inspiration and thus of "Afroness." But we can also define "Afroness" in a sense in which a primordial connection between American blacks and their deeper African heritage is recognized and made conscious. This ethnic awareness will embrace all black peoples' experience, but with an emphasis on its functions and realities rather than on its mystical side. This side of "Afroness" has been called the "Pan-Negro" or "race-man" outlook.[4]

In terms of this notion of a primordial connection with black origins, at least one of Richard Wright's works of the 1930s is thoroughly and even militantly Pan-Negro in orientation. In *Twelve Million Black Voices*, the major nonfictional work of his formative years, he sees the degradation of black Americans as an extension of the powerlessness of black peoples the world over. Wright expresses the primordial black viewpoint in this work explicitly with a pragmatic cast, free of any romanticism.[5]

We might find another explanation for Wright's neglect of the New Negro movement's "Afroness" in his education and class background. Most of the black intellectual activists in the New Negro movement were college-educated, not infrequently at elite white colleges (Amherst, Harvard, Williams, Chicago), though usually at Negro colleges (Langston Hughes, for instance, attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania). Most of them came from the black middle class, and some from the affluent black upper middle class—they were the sons and daughters of doctors, dentists, lawyers, businessmen, and civil servants. A survey of 40 intellectuals who were active in the New Negro movement shows that 55 percent came from professional homes and 45 percent from solid middle-class or white-collar families.[6]

Richard Wright was not college-educated nor did he come from the black bourgeoisie. His formal education had ended in secondary school, and his family was stable working class, with upward aspirations. Wright's mother, a major force in his childhood, was a domestic servant who entertained middle-class expectations for Richard, and guarded him carefully in his choice of social peers. Wright told his biographer, Constance Webb, of his mother cautioning him against fraternization with lower-class Negro children. "Son," she once said, "they are your color but they aren't your kind." Wright, however, was ambivalent about his mother's warnings; though he deferred to her expectations for upward mobility through achievement, he instinctively rejectd her other aspiration and refused to become part of the black bourgeoisie. Richard Wright's rejection of the black bourgeoisie was partly informed by his childhood antipathy for the Negro colleges that trained most of its members. He provided his biographer with a rather embittered description of the Negro college located near his family home in Jackson, Mississippi. The color-caste barrier within these bourgeois institutions angered Wright no end:

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> . . . only those considered "big Niggers" sent their children there. Money alone was not sufficient: at the time, there existed a "blue-vein" society in Jackson, and if skin tone was not mixed sufficiently with white so that blue veins clearly showed in the wrists a Negro was excluded.[7]

Then again, in the Foreword to *Twelve Million Black Voices*, in which he cuttingly dismissed the black bourgeoisie as subject matter for this book on Afro-Americans' plight, he rejects the mystical-aesthetic orientations that the black bourgeoisie's children had invented in the New Negro movement:

> This text, while purporting to render a broad picture of the processes of Negro life in the United States, intentionally does not include in its considerations those areas of Negro life which comprise the so-called talented tenth, or the isolated islands of mulatto leadership which are still to be found in many parts of the South, or the growing and influential Negro middle-class professionals and business men of the North who have, for the past thirty years or more, formed a sort of liaison corps between the whites and the blacks. Their exclusion from these pages does not imply any invidious judgment, nor does it stem from any desire to underestimate their progress and contributions. . . . This text assumes that those Negroes who have lifted themselvs, through personal strength, talent, or luck, above the lives of their fellow blacks—like single fishes that leap and flash for a split second above the surface of the sea—are but fleeting exceptions to that vast, tragic school that swims below in the depths, against the current, silently and heavily, struggling against the waves of vicissitudes that spell a common fate.[8]

For Wright, then, only the black masses, the common folk, and their mode of life—at botton organic and unfabricated—give a legitimate aura to the black experience. Yet Wright was somewhat apologetic about this orientation: "It is not," he remarks in a qualifying mood, "to celebrate or exalt the plight of the humble folk who swim in the depths that I select the conditions of their lives as examples of normality, but rather to seize upon that which is qualitative and abiding in Negro experience. . . ." Thus, lacking "normality" and an "abiding" quality, the social patterns of the black bourgeoisie were, in Wright's view, essentially inauthentic. He thought the goals and public posture of the black bourgeoisie were salvaged less from the struggle of class oppression than from the junky compromises that capitalist society usually requires of those who are ambitious (grasping).[9] The New Negro movement's concern with "Afroness" was, in Wright's view, one such tendentious manipulation, without an "abiding" quality. Put another way, in Marxist language that was familiar to Wright, scratch a cultural (ethnic) nationalist and you'll find a status-striving bourgeois.

Wright's Marxist prism shaped his view of the cultural nationalism formulated by intellectuals of black-bourgeois background in the 1920s and '30s. With their cultural-nationalist concept of "Afroness," these intellectuals called upon and retrieved the black past—its cultural history—in order to serve, as Wright saw it, their own pretensions to social status and power. Wright felt little kinship to the black bourgeoisie; he rejected its concepts and its purposes out-of-hand. Yet he clung to the blackness of the Afro-American lower classes and yearned for a means of expressing this attachment. Marxism became his outlet and instrument.

Marxism, Power, and Marginality

JUST AS THE INTELLECTUALS of the New Negro movement used "Afroness" as both an aesthetic guide and as a political-normative principle that defined their bourgeois condition in terms of the plight of all blacks, so Richard Wright required a comparable ideological posture to both inform his creativity and define his abhorrence of the black bourgeoisie. Wright's turn toward Marxism and the Communist movement was virtually preordained, for these were the dominant anti-bourgeois forces among American intellectuals in his formative years, and they also were antiracist, even militantly so. Thus Marxism afforded Wright a multifaceted marginality. Marxism spoke to his antibourgeois and anti-black/bourgeois attitudes as well as to his

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fervent gut-level identification with blackness and the Negro folk. Wright was, incidentally, joined in this ideological posture by a few other talented Afro-American intellectuals, most notably the poet Claude McKay and the singer and actor Paul Robeson.

Throughout the 1930s Wright encountered frequent tests of his marginal-man identity, tests that forced him to recognize the ambiguity of his identification. This was to plague him for the rest of his life. His biographer records one of his numerous treks through Chicago's Washington Park in the 1930s, during which he invariably encountered black nationalist, usually Garveyite spokesmen holding forth. On one occasion a Garveyite, recognizing Wright, admonished him to be consistent by turning his antipathy to capitalist racism into organized black nationalist militancy. Wright quickly demurred, explaining "that he was trying to be a writer"—trying to sustain his creative identity; yet at the same time Wright gave vent to his gut-level blackness, "letting down his own reserve, admitting them [the Garveyites] to personal territory, because he had not the heart to say they would never succeed."[10]

This inner division was always the hardest for Wright to manage. As he told his biographer:

> [I] loved [the Garveyites'] passionate rejection of America. . . . They sensed with that directness of which only the simple [the common folk] are capable that they had no chance to live a full human life in America. Their lives were not cluttered with ideas in which they could only half believe [as with intellectuals like himself]; they could not create illusions which made them think they were living when they were not [as with the black bourgeoisie]; their daily lives were too nakedly harsh to permit of camouflage. I understood their emotions; for I partly shared them.[11]

Yet again, Wright's gut-level immersion in the blackness of the Negro folk—the only blackness he held authentic—was not limitless. For ideological commitment can distort the marginalist intellectual's primary thrust—*to be his own man*. Wright had a keen insight into the fact that, like power, ideological commitment—whether ethnic, religious, or political—can overwhelm the aesthetic quest. He grappled with this issue often in his fiction, but perhaps nowhere more poignantly than in his novel *Lawd Today*, written in 1935-37 but published in 1963. Jake Jackson, the protagonist, is cryptic in commenting on a Back-to-Africa parade he is watching with friends:

> "You know what I don't like about them folks?" asked Jake.
>
> "What?"
>
> "They want us to go back to Africa."
>
> "I don't like that, neither."
>
> "They's sure nuts on that point."
>
> "And if we went back to Africa, what would we do?"
>
> "You'll have to ask them that."
>
> "Aw. . . . They nuts as Hell," said Jake, with an impatient wave of the hand.[12]

As it happened, in the last decade of his life, in the 1950s, Richard Wright experienced the same illusion of "Back-to-Africa" as a source of power or regeneration. He actually journeyed to Africa, though without the ritualistic trappings of Garveyism. By then Wright had forsaken the Communist movement. This left him with only the Marxist idea to sustain his marginality—for the first time a marginality shed of the pretense that it would enable him to influence the condition of blacks. This vacuum, Wright hoped, might be filled by identification with the power of emergent African nationalism, particularly in the Marxist-inclined state of Ghana.

Wright's African journey, however, presented its own pitfalls. In the free African countries he now saw blacks in power. Deeply appealing as this was to the typical black intellectual from the Diaspora, Wright's commitment to marginality—being his own man—influenced him to regard power as a kiss of death. Given the marginal intellectual's need to "smell a rat"—to use Mary McCarthy's memorable phrase—all that power offers such intellectuals is an illusion, a respite from the elusive complications of marginality.

For Richard Wright, then, power within a viable black framework had remained an idea, a goal, out of reach until the last decade

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of his life. Then, when it came into focus as a possible reality, he saw it wrapped in the seductive garb of black nationalism—now articulated by the emerging African nation-states. Thus the issue for Wright became whether or not to abandon his habitual ambivalence toward power, an ambivalence that is the lot of the marginal man.

Several alternatives were available to him. First *as a Marxist* he could defer to the prevailing Marxist strategies for managing power, the successful ones being Communist and totalitarian. Second, *as a gut-level believer in blackness* Wright might have accepted uncritically whatever forms of power the new African elites would fashion. Third, *as a marginal man* Wright could fall back upon his own resourcefulness, fashioning a unique style of confronting power on behalf of a continent—Africa—with which he claimed a primordial emotional identification.

Wright chose the last option. And this choice caused him consternation on the very eve of his departure from London for Africa in 1953. Attending a cocktail party for him where many intellectuals from new nations were present, Wright was cornered by Madame Vijaya Pandit, the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, and he proceeded to test his nascent view of power in the societies of Asia and Africa that were then undergoing decolonization. "Can't you see," Wright said to Madame Pandit, "that feudal states, tribal states, are lost in the world today? Can't you see that the great powerful industrial states set the tone and conditions of living in this world? Why not borrow instrumentalities, techniques from the West [or the Communist East]?"[13]

Wright was saying, in effect, that it would be a misplaced and dangerous pretension for ruling elites in developing non-Western societies to believe they could modernize outside the patterns established by the Western industrialized nations. Yet alongside Wright's eclectic pragmatism was his deeply critical assessment of Western civilization in general and capitalism in particular—a perspective deriving from both his gut-level antipathy to white racism and his Marxist commitment. This split vision of the West's modernity is evident in Wright's quixotic account of his West African journey, *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (1954). He further expanded his bifurcated view of modernization in two subsequent volumes, *The Color Curtain* (1956) and *White Man Listen!* (1957).

The heart of Richard Wright's view of power in regard to Africa's quest for modernity is found in the concluding section of *Black Power*, in which he pens a letter giving advice to Ghana's Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah, cautioning him against too much openness toward the West but also, at the same time, not to abandon this openness altogether:

> Have no illusions regarding Western attitudes [Wright says to Nkrumah]. . . . Westerners, high and low, feel that their codes, ideals, and conceptions of humanity do not apply to black men. If until today Africa was static, it was because Europeans deliberately wanted to keep her that way. They do not even treat the question of Africa's redemption seriously; to them it is a source of amusement; and those few Europeans who do manage to become serious about Africa are more often prompted by psychological reasons than anything else.[14]

Yet in the same "letter" Wright insists that the African states' black leaders must deal with the industrial West—and with the Communist East as well—but always with utmost skepticism, never falling victim to the West's or the East's own theoretical or ideological assumptions. Thus he informs Nkrumah that—

> In your hands lies the first bid for African freedom and independence. Whatever the West or East offers, take it, but don't let them take you. You have taken Marxism, that intellectual instrument that makes meaningful the class and commodity relations in the modern state; but the moment that that instrument ceases to shed meaning, drop it. Be on top of theory; don't let theory be on top of you. In short, be free, be a living embodiment of what you want to give your people. . . .[15]

Nonetheless, however crucial the correct outlook toward the West and East to the

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successful modernization of Africa, Richard Wright felt that this was hardly adequate. African leaders must also fashion a viable orientation toward their own cultural traditions, generalizing and drawing from them a workable structure within which to manage modern power. In tackling this delicate issue, Richard Wright, the marginal man, was unencumbered by those sentimental postures that spring from the kind of idealization of Africa (and of blackness) that many Afro-American intellectuals of his time were prone to adopt—for he never had any truck with the ideology of "Afroness" and *négritude*. Wright saw Africa's traditional societies as structurally disheveled, and if they were to help forge large-scale modern states, they would require hierarchical and centralizing mechanisms of government.

What is more, Richard Wright's visit to the rural hinterland of Ghana led him to conclude that the very fabric of social order in Africa was so tenuous and fragile, so buffeted by ancient mysticism that only military-type rule—not modern democratic forms of government—would suffice. As Wright put it:

> The basis, concrete and traditional, for the militarization of African life is there already in the truncated tribal structure. The ideological justification for such measures is simply survival; the military is but another name for fraternization, for cohesiveness. And a military structure of African society can be used eventually for defense. *Most important of all, a military form of African society will atomize the fetish-ridden past, abolish the mystical and nonsensical family relations that freeze the African in his static degradation; it will render impossible the continued existence of those parasitic chiefs who have too long bled and misled a naive people; it is the one and only stroke that can project the African immediately into the twentieth century!* [Emphasis added.][16]

Resolving the Crisis of Black Intellectuals

TO THE VERY END of his African journey, Richard Wright persisted in his marginal intellectual posture. He never hesitated to submit the most revered features of black civilizations (the tribe, family, religious forms) to the most irreverent critical examination, letting the chips fall where they may. *Confronting sacred cows is basic to the marginal man.*

Wright turned his back on the taste of parochial nationalist power that Nkrumah's Ghana would have offered him—as Ghana so readily offered it to other black American and West Indian intellectuals. That Wright rejected this taste of power remains a fascinating issue. By this time he surely knew that many of his peers among marginalist intellectuals—black and white, and especially Jewish—were retreating from marginality, owing to new political realities (Zionism and the State of Israel, black nationalism and Africa) that afford respite from the tension of marginalist identification. Such an identification is not, after all, easy to sustain. Only that small band of intellectuals who searchingly grasp the elusive dialectic of marginality, especially as it sustains one's creative presence, are capable of clinging to marginalist postures. It is, indeed, precisely in matters of identity that modern men and women are most vulnerable. Only a few will ever endure functional discrepancies in identity (which is what marginality amounts to) as the price of the creative life. Richard Wright was one of them.

Viewed, then, from this austere vantage point, Wright's death in 1960 takes on larger implications for the new generation of Afro-American intellectuals. For Wright died at the dawn of a new movement of ethnic chauvinism among black intellectuals. Though this movement—the Black Aesthetic movement—possessed some potential for viable achievement, the context within which it surfaced forced it down the path of xenophobic cultural-politicization. This path, always littered with aesthetic treachery, might have been averted if Wright had lived.

But when searching the Afro-American heritage for inspiration, the Black Aesthetic movement's leaders (Addison Gayle, Larry Neal, Amiri Baraka, Don Lee, and Hoyt Fuller, editor of the movement's main journal, the *Black World*) ignored Richard

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Wright's marginalist example and turned instead to the Garvey movement's separatism. Thus during its period of influence in Afro-American intellectual life, from the late 1960s to the middle 1970s, the Black Aesthetic movement did little to extend the creative range and aesthetic depth of works by black intellectuals, though it was quite successful at innovating doctrinaire forms through which black intellectuals might realize ethnocentric commitment. The Black Aesthetic movement's success in this regard among black intellectuals was unprecedented, generating enormous acclaim and celebration—often tacky—from the Afro-American community. No previous generation of black intellectuals had experienced such acclaim.

In choosing not to heed Wright's marginalist precedent, the Black Aesthetic intellectuals were nowhere near as successful as Wright in resolving the perennial problem of black intellectuals—the relation between intellectual identity and ethnic commitment in a racist, capitalist society. Central to the crisis of Afro-American intellectuals is a paradox: *the social and political status of black ethnicity has been historically denigrated, but the aesthetic modalities of black life (the modalities that produced Negro Spirituals, Jazz, and the Blues) have been assimilated into American cultural-expressive patterns.* Put another way, denying blacks' social and political parity is not and never was tantamount to cultural rejection of the *présence noire*—or to a rejection of its shaping influence on the American character, whether in secular, popular or in sacred-religious culture (for instance, white Pentacostals and Catholic charismatics are distinctly influenced by black religious expression).

This paradox, so basic to racism in American life, stems from the fact that America is, above all else, a market civilization—a culture whose quintessential concern is production and exchange. Thus, despite the ostensible illegitimacy of black ethnicity in the American cultural scheme, black aesthetic modes and forms are fervently exploited in the white marketplace. Several generations of white Americans (across ethnic groups: Jews, Irish, WASPs, Italians, Poles, and so forth) have had some basic facet of their identity nurtured by white by-products of black ethnicity, such as Swing, Rock, and Disco music. The apparent contradiction of all this is but a facet of the myriad confusions that have always defined the American character.

Thus the crisis of Afro-American intellectuals is plain but baffling. Even though black ethnicity has a denigrated status in American society, whites compete for the market value of the blacks' cultural-expressive forms, *forever complicating the black intellectuals' quest for control over these forms and thus for control over their own identity.*

For Richard Wright's era (1930s-60) the creative aspect of the black intellectuals' response to this crisis was of a relatively high order, as Wright's own work attests. The post-Wright era, dominated by the Black Aesthetic movement, has witnessed a response by black intellectuals that, while protesting otherwise, essentially surrenders creative values for political ones—a response that is oblivious to the contradictions and ambiguities, the myriad paradoxes that define American life and culture. Alas, managing contradiction and paradox has never been the forte of xenophobic groups in American life—be they xenophobic Anglo-Protestants confronting Catholics, xenophobic Gentiles confronting Jews, xenophobic Jews confronting Gentiles, xenophobic whites confronting blacks, or xenophobic blacks confronting whites. The response of the Black Aesthetic movement is, predictably, simple enough: it burdens black aesthetic modalities with the xenophobic rituals and fetishes that surround the bitter political conflict between blacks and whites since the 1960s. In this way this movement endeavors to create black art forms that, its leaders hope, are beyond the cultural-expressive range and reach of the white American (or "Whitey," a term the black xenophobe prefers and a term, ironically, as dehumanizing in its own way as the term "Nigger," preferred by white racists.)[17]

But, as Ralph Ellison has proclaimed for some years now, the black-white nexus in

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American culture, despite its racism, is too deep in time and too intricate in character to be upended by the xenophobic styles of the Black Aesthetic movement—or, for that matter, by the equivalent styles of white racists as well. For Ellison, the black artist who indulges in xenophobia is soon trapped in a process of confusing ideology and aesthetic—a confusion that seized Le Roi Jones by the middle 1960s, as revealed in his book *Blues People*. As Ellison sees it, in *Blues People*

> Jones attempts to impose an ideology upon this cultural complexity [Afro-American expressive forms] and this might be useful if he knew enough of the related subjects to make it interesting. . . . It is unfortunate that Jones thought it necessary to ignore the aesthetic nature of the blues in order to make his ideologial point. . . . Much has been made of the fact that *Blues People* is one of the few books by a Negro to treat the subject. Unfortunately for those who expect that Negroes would have a special insight into this mysterious art, this is not enough. Here, too, the critical intelligence must perform the difficult task which only it can perform.[18]

Thus it is apparent that the Black Aesthetic movement's sway among Afro-American intellectuals in the post-Wright era has been characterized by a decline in aesthetic depth and creative range; few enduring works have emerged from artists of the Black Aesthetic mode. Indeed, only with this movement's decline in the middle 1970s, freeing the aesthetic and ideological market available to Afro-American intellectuals, are there signs of a creative renascence among Afro-American artists—as evidenced, for example, by the Dance Theater of Harlem, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, and the post-Black Aesthetic works of Larry Neal, now deceased, of whom the black critic Stanley Crouch recently remarked:

> He was one of the most adventurous and intelligent men we had and his sense of intellectual responsibility often called upon him to disagree with the conventions of black nationalism as the romance began to fade in face of the megalomania, the lies, the avarice, and the interwoven monstrosities of totalitarian and opportunistic impulses.[19]

Failing to wrench black creative modalities from the reach of white hands, the Black Aesthetic movement inevitably dissolves into politics pure-and-simple. Its problack and antiracist posturing, while ridden with creative pretensions, is little more than a knee-jerk experience for Afro-American intellectuals, necessitating no profound creative quest. Yet, seeking instead more varied modes for one's creative purposes is the burden of those individual black intellectuals who take creativity seriously but also cherish their concern for the needs of the Afro-American community.[20] For this type of black intellectual the creative quest is aided by dwelling, as Richard Wright dwelled, at the periphery of both one's ethnic milieu and the establishmentarian-minded mainstream. This offers freedom from phony ethnicity (or phony patriotism and class loyalty)—which is to say, freedom from contrived ethnic obligation, without precluding service to ethnic needs when that is warranted. This latter service the intellectual himself defines rather than having it imposed on him.

AS RICHARD WRIGHT WAS well aware, there is no blueprint defining how one dwells at the margins of both the black and the general American culture. Some Afro-American intellectuals, such as the poet June Jordan, function within an essentially all-black milieu, but in a manner that keeps their creative essence unconstrained by parochial or xenophobic ethnic perceptions. Other black intellectuals, such as James Baldwin and Ishmael Reed, function within interracial and international milieus, but in a manner that respects the dimensions of blackness in their works while interacting with other cultural (aesthetic) cross-currents. Wright believed that it is essential for black intellectuals to ensure their access to a cosmopolitan stream of aesthetic cross currents. Anything less must distort a black intellectual's creative work.

Political commitment is never an easy matter, never a one-dimensional reality. While it can ensue from a variety of positions on the political-ideological spectrum, from left to right, it must reflect attitudes that respect the

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intellectual's concern with nuances and distinctions. In this context the issue of ethnic chauvinism must ultimately be confronted by those intellectuals who prize, above all, an open-ended creative life—a life not artificially hemmed in by a priori obligation to ethnic or racial and national presuppositions.[21]

This is never easy—especially in periods when one's ethnic group is engaged in a battle for political, social, and cultural parity—a battle that Afro-Americans continually wage. Thus it is unlikely that in the foreseeable future more than a few Afro-American intellectuals will seek an open-ended creative life, and that more than a few will be able to sustain the tension that ensues from a marginal identification with their ethnic group while still committed—through action and creative pursuit—to the group's needs. It can only be hoped that those who do so will leave, as Wright left it, a legacy worthy of their choice.

Notes

[1] See the interesting survey findings on the persistence of white values in shaping blacks' self-perceptions, in Kenneth B. Clark, "What Do Blacks Think of Themselves?" *Ebony*, November 1980, pp. 176-82.

[2] Nathan Glazer, *The Social Basis of American Communism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1961).

[3] See Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York: A. and C. Boni, 1925). See also Nathan Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

[4] See Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot, 1832-1912* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1967). See also August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915: Racial Ideologies in the Age of Booker T. Washington* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963).

[5] Richard Wright, *Twelve Million Black Voices* (New York: Viking, 1941).

[6] Robert A. Bone, *The Negro Novel in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 56.

[7] Constance Webb, *Richard Wright: A Biography* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1968), pp. 30-31, 61. Tougaloo College was the one with a "blue-vein" clique.

[8] Wright, *Twelve Million Black Voices*, p. 5.

[9] For an approving view of bourgeois ambition and the tendentious manipulations required for its fulfillment, see Joseph Epstein, *Ambition* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1980). Cf. Mark Shechner's perceptive review of this work, "The Ford in our Past," *Nation* (January 17, 1981), pp. 53-56.

[10] Webb, *Richard Wright*, p. 115.

[11] Ibid., pp. 116-18.

[12] Richard Wright, *Lawd Today* (New York: Walker, 1963), p. 95.

[13] Webb, *Richard Wright*, p. 321.

[14] Richard Wright, *Black Power: A Record of Reactions in a Land of Pathos* (New York: Harper, 1954), p. 49.

[15] Ibid., p. 350.

[16] Ibid., pp. 348-49.

[17] For the nature of the Black Aesthetic movement see Addison Gayle, ed., *The Black Aesthetic* (New York: Doubleday, 1971). See such current magazines as *Black Scholar*, the *First World*, and also *Black World*, now defunct for four years.

[18] See Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act* (New York: New American Library, 1966) pp. 249-50. In a recent interview during which Ellison was asked about attacks on him carried in the *Black World* in the 1970s, Ellison relished the demise of the xenophobic elements and their organ: "Safe behind the fence provided by a black capitalist [John Johnson, publisher of *Ebony*], they had one big 'barking-at-the-big-gate' go at me. They even convinced a few students that I was the worst disaster that had ever hit Afro-American writing. But for all their attacks I'm still here trying—while if I'm asked where is *Black World* today my answer is: Gone with the snows of yester-year/down the pissoir—Da-Daa, Da-Daaa—and good riddance!" In Robert O'Meally, "Ralph Ellison's Invisible Novel," *New Republic* (January 17, 1981), p. 27.

[19] Stanley Couch, "Larry Neal, 1937-1981," *The Village Voice*, January 14-20, 1981, p. 26.

[20] The problem of objectifying the relationship between ideology and politics, on the one hand, and the creative quest, on the other, has great vintage among Afro-American intellectuals, as Harold W. Cruse shows in *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (New York: Morrow, 1967).

[21] See Orlando Patterson, *Ethnic Chauvinism: The Reactionary Impulse* (New York: Stein & Day, 1978). This neglected book offers a brilliant analysis of the dilemmas that ethnic chauvinism creates for Afro-American and Jewish intellectuals. □

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James E. Block

New Shapes of Family Life

The fate of the American family has become news. Even casual exposure to the media reveals this recurring preoccupation. Throughout television and the popular movies, the public is bombarded with themes of incest, divorce, runaways, parental abandonment, nonmarital cohabitation, and generational struggle. Prime-time family programs no longer shy away from the graphic presentation of these issues; special reports and regular spots on daily newscasts seek to convince us of the pervasiveness of these dislocations. There is furthermore a constant escalation: the most disturbing statistics, the first litigation of its kind, the highest level of abuse, the strangest form of living arrangement, and so forth. The worst of these forecasts are repeated in the more serious work of scholars and prestigious commissions; one prominent sociologist, for example, wrote not long ago: "At the present accelerating rate of depletion, the United States will run out of families not long after it runs out of oil." [1]

Despite this growing clamor, however, American society has neither begun to work out new models nor acted effectively to shore up the traditional family. My argument here is that the present crisis has proceeded from the consistent extension of voluntarist principles of autonomy, choice, and mutuality—universally approved standards in our liberal culture—to the last traditional institution. This, in turn, by distributing power to all members of the family and decreasing paternal authority, repeats the democratization earlier undergone by religious and political institutions.

From this perspective, the dilemma of the family is clear. So long as voluntarist values are held by a great majority of the population, the authority-centered, nonconsensual family will not find any secure or legitimate basis. This presents us with what is for many people an unwelcome choice: to bring the family into line with contemporary culture, at great cost to its traditional patterns of stability, or to explicitly compromise our commitment to voluntarism by restoring the vitality of its hierarchal arrangements. Because of our suspicion that either alternative would present difficulties, we have, so far, made no decision at all.

II

To gauge the full depth of the present crisis, we must examine the impact of cultural voluntarism upon the family, beginning with the public perception of available options in sexual and family life. In the media today, the traditional nuclear family appears to have become an ideal rather than a functional type. Every conceivable relationship is now talked about, written about, and defended: group, serial, homosexual, May-December, December-May, unmarried, parent-child, sibling, prepubescent—even marriage itself. Several recent books document the increase in the traditionally most censured relation, incest (as in *The Broken Taboo: Sex in the Family* and *Kiss Daddy Goodnight*). Advocates of equal treatment for women and gays continue to press for an end to the cultural domination of "masculinity" and male prerogative. The reported epidemic of youth sex, illegitimacy, and abortions suggests that for many young people the marital structure has

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lost whatever moral hold it once had. Extensive data on parental divorce, abandonment, single-parenting, and swinging makes the same point for adults.

A 21-year-old homosexual adopts a 23-year-old homosexual as his son in Milwaukee County Court, claiming afterward that adoption is "more permanent" and, to be sure, more legal than gay marriage. The phenomenon of childless (heterosexual) couples appears to be increasingly viable—note the recent book *None's Been Fun*. At the same time, parenting by proxy and by advertising have become alternatives to traditional mating. Special attention is given to the dual-career, two-city couple. The well-publicized *Marvin* case in California holds that unmarried cohabitants can legally be bound by implied as well as express contracts regarding personal finances, setting off a wave of parallel litigation in other states. Three clever women from New York City start a business, "Daddy, Don't Forget," to purchase and deliver presents to the children of divorced and absent fathers, promising to hide from the child the true source of the gift and, of course, to notify the father of his thoughtful choice. National runaway legislation is amended to make reporting the discovery of runaways to their parents optional rather than mandatory. Cult participants and their parents fight in courts across the land regarding the child's right to religious autonomy. Studies on intrafamilial behavior note the upsurge of child abuse, wife abuse, then battered husbands, and finally parent abuse. The first interspousal rape trial in American history, the Rideout case, gathers front-page headlines for a year, until the husband is acquitted. It is followed shortly by the first conviction for such an offense in America, of an unemployed bartender from Salem, Massachusetts. Tommy Hansen of Boulder, Colorado, takes his parents to court in the first known case alleging parental malpractice.

Claims by juveniles to rights regarding every aspect of their role within the family are now routinely presented to the American courts at all levels of jurisdiction. Cynthia Snyder, 16, initiated litigation in Washington State against her parents to have them relieved of parental duties, and won. Parents in Milwaukee in turn sued to "divorce" their 16-year-old daughter, and they won. Ulla Jacobssen, professor of law at Stockholm University, has published a book advocating the universal legalization of voluntary parent-child separation and the creation of alternative socializing arrangements.

The United States Supreme Court was recently confronted by the claim of the State of California that parents should not have the final decision on major medical surgery for their adolescent child. Even more recently, the Court agreed to let stand a ruling of the California Supreme Court that parents cannot give consent to the police searching their minor child's private property for contraband, because of the minor's right to privacy.

In a similar development, mass-market women's magazines, once family-oriented, now carry articles on how to cope with divorce, joint custody, remarriage, multiple parents or spouses, meeting the ex-spouse socially, and the second try at dating; on how to obtain rights and the competitive advantage when negotiating *Marvin* contracts; on hot lines, houses and religious communities for runaways and the work being done to save them from prostitution, drugs, and adult violence; on programs and clinics dealing with family abuse; on resolving the decision whether to have children, and how parents and children should deal with the rights of children—on, in short, every aspect of the changing tableau of youth and family life.

III

The constant barrage of cases, statistics, and human-interest stories might be seen as a clear example of media sensationalism. But the idea of an increasingly consensual family is ever more widely accepted, even by such establishment institutions as the legal system and the advertising industry. The Supreme Court of California began its precedent-setting *Marvin* decision: "During the past fifteen years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of [unmarried] cou-

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ples living together," [2] and then cited an eight-fold increase in ten years. Despite strong language in support of marriage, the Court acknowledged the necessity for equitable forms of property distribution for these relations, since they form a realistic choice for men and women.

State judiciaries together with the legislatures have responded to the freedom and flexibility of modern living arrangements by repealing or refusing to enforce adultery statutes, providing for personalized custody arrangements and prenuptial contracts, allowing for interspousal rape and tort litigation, and above all making divorce a matter of subject inclination ("I just don't feel like staying married"). Legal commentators have largely supported these liberalizations, speaking frankly about the transition of marriage toward a voluntary contractual arrangement with regard to all critical terms.

The most important and perplexing legal transformation comes in the area of children's rights. Litigation in behalf of children has led to a geometric increase of cases and to many successful challenges of existing laws. The first stage was the rejection of a needs or benefits approach to the child's status in favor of a rights approach. The child's traditional legal disability was eroded with a host of novel cases declaring constitutional rights with respect to criminal procedure, association, liberty, freedom of movement, privacy, sexual and health matters, life style and dress, legal counsel, and political expression. Court challenges continue to advocate the expansion of specific rights and the abolition of the presumption of minority incapacity itself.

Within the family, the presumption of an identity of interests between parents and their children—the legal backbone of the traditional family (how, after all, could a single organic entity sue itself?)—has given way to a recognition of often divergent and adversarial interests. Parents are no longer immune to tort actions by their children, and separate counsel is provided for children in divorce, custody, and related proceedings. With *Hansen* and other cases, legitimation of intrafamilial litigation now extends not only to specific negligent and intentional tortious acts but—through the claims of parental malpractice—to the very relationship itself. The Supreme Court majority in the *Danforth* opinion permitting abortions for minors without parental consent acknowledged the serious possibility of a diversity of interests and the need to protect minors from parental action:

> . . . the State does not have the constitutional authority to give a third-party [i.e., parents] an absolute, and possibly arbitrary veto over the decision of the physician and his patient to terminate the patient's pregnancy. . . . [3]

This (and the similar view of several courts) was perhaps most poignantly expressed by a Court of Appeals judge in New York:

> It is a sad but telling commentary upon the relation subsisting between father and daughter that resort to the courts was employed to resolve this domestic problem. The surge of adolescent independence, the breakdown of parental authority and the frustration attending both are indeed matters of common occurrence.[4]

As a result, parental-consent requirements have been rejected by some courts in cases of medical treatment, abortions, contraception, psychiatric hospitalization, and participation in drug abuse programs. Other courts have advocated the child's right to independent determinations in educational and religious matters. Legal commentators have further suggested a stricter explicit code of legal responsibility for parental action, the application of the recent Swedish anti-spanking law, and the transformation of the traditional right of family privacy into a legal right of privacy for each individual within the family.

This expansion of the role of children now extends to the very decision regarding the choice of the supervising adult. In an influential book, child psychoanalyst Anna Freud together with a noted legal scholar and therapist advocates that decisive weight be given in custody proceedings to the primary psychological relationship the child has with an adult rather than to the biological parent-child tie.[5] This major rejection of the inviolability of the parent-child standards of some years ago from parental fitness to the child's

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best interest, has had success in the courts.

Along with the emerging area of child divorce, this development indicates that the standard of a successful adult-child relation is shifting from the absence of a specific harm to subjective compatibility. In the *Snyder* litigation before the Washington State Supreme Court (in which the minor claimed a deteriorating and thus intolerable relationship with her parents), the Court reinterpreted the traditional law by granting the minor's claim to a "no-fault" separation without finding the standard grounds of either parental negligence or juvenile incorrigibility. It commented:

> We feel it is imperative to recognize that the issues of who is actually responsible for the breakdown in the parent-child relationship is irrelevant to the disposition of this case. The issue is whether . . . the parent-child relationship has dissipated to the point where parental control is lost. . . . [6]

This recognition of the claims of children has led to the furthest extension of independence—the effort to define the parent-child relation as a quasi-contractual bond (modeled on the new contractual relationship between men and women) involving mutual rights and obligations. The drafting of childrens' Bills of Rights enumerating a series of protected forms of expression and realms of decision-making has been undertaken by a broad spectrum of legal and child-care professionals.

At the same time, the advertising profession has moved quickly—as one might expect—to project the changing relations in the family. It glorifies the liberated, swinging, single life style, the pervasiveness of liaisons and encounters, and the triumph of flexibility. Women are now shown increasingly in professional and work situations possessing "clout," and this new status also has profoundly altered the portrayal of family decision-making. Even more striking is the new representation of children as a powerful constituency. Many television ads today portray parents increasingly solicitous of the taste preferences (and good will) of their children and children's friends, at the extreme even deferring to the child's product judgment—note the five-year-old child who claims to make the family decision on brands of peanut butter (though respecting the mother's choice of vegetables). This sort of thing is beginning to occur often enough to constitute a new series of messages to family members. Children are even shown as a force whose opinions on such "adult" matters as a new car or home flooring material must be won over.

The advertising industry thus sponsors the diffusion of authority, the sensitivity of husbands to their wives, parents to their children. Its recognition of the cultural goal of independent decision-making, so easily catered to in nonfamily settings, has led to a perception of the family itself as governed far more by consensus and equilibrium than by secure power relations, not only in child and youth market products (which in their proliferation themselves define an economic and cultural shift of historic proportions) but in every family decision.

IV

These dizzying changes force us to consider the issue more closely. While giving credence to talk of a crisis in the family can make one uncomfortable, it is hardly realistic to suggest that our most basic, primary association is being fragmented by media and market strategies and the pressure of individual claims on the legal system alone. If the media were to proclaim in a loud and unanimous voice the passing of the age of multinational corporations, would we then see a reemergence of family-owned businesses? Our appetite for information, propaganda, and melodrama regarding this issue, our sensitivity to its every nuance suggest that the sensationalism represents, with whatever distortions, a changing social reality.

This belief is shared by many. Hence the repeated demands by prominent citizens and civic groups for government action to arrest the "progressive fragmentation" of the American family. President Carter organized a White House Conference on the problem; then, claiming that the family is "in serious trouble . . . [and] strained to the breaking

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point by social and economic forces beyond its control," he ordered the creation of a federal Office for Families. State, local, and national funds were poured in to deal with child and wife beating, with runaways, drug and sex abuse by setting up facilities, hot lines, counseling and reporting agencies. The Carnegie Council on Children, headed by Kenneth Keniston, suggests in a major study on children in America the universality of the problem by announcing that its proposals "depart from those traditionally advocated on behalf of children, for we do not focus primarily on . . . programs designed especially for 'needy' children and families."[7]

What exists, in short, is not a problem of marginal or problem families but a crisis that has reached affluent and socially integrated families. It cannot be met simply by raising new funds or instituting welfare programs to cure historic inequities and disabilities; it is a cultural shift in our values produced by the triumph of the liberal ethos. Liberals, who have struggled to achieve equality, autonomy, and consensus in every other institution of Western life, suddenly find these values expressed in the life of the family. The powerful, almost single-minded, voluntarist bias of our culture, while more highly visible in the legal system and the advertising industry, has encouraged pursuit of the liberated, personally fulfilling life style by Americans of every class, age, and sex. These two central institutions in American society, in fact, the foundation of our political system and the marketing arm of corporate capitalism, merely reflect the dominant focus on individual choice. Their receptivity to voluntarist values come not from any commitment to social change but—in the pursuit of profit or in the case-by-case resolution of actual destinies before them—from an extremely pragmatic assessment of what the American public will accept. Lawyers and judges have in many cases acted simply out of a desire to incorporate experimental behavior as best they can within the existing system. But each time, from the incremental liberalization of divorce to the decriminalization of adultery to legitimation of cohabitation, they only loosen the institutional ties of the traditional family and demonstrate in the process the tide of voluntarism.

What are "realists" supposed to do when American adults increasingly demonstrate an unwillingness to be bound by conditions of life not in their immediate interest? Andrew Hacker recently wrote:

> Most of us realize why marriages are falling apart, even if we can't do much about it. . . . We are more self-centered than people were in the past, more insistent on having things the way we want them. We use terms like "growth," "self-realization," even "happiness." But all come down to demanding a life tailored to our liking.[8]

The middle and working classes traditionally adhered to and supported strict behavioral norms; the violation of these norms by the well-to-do or by cultural radicals was a socially marginal phenomenon. But with the demand for equal access to contemporary life styles, now at least partially met, there is no longer a rigidly separate counterculture or elite culture. Given the universal rejection of constraints on individual autonomy, traditional norms no longer exist to be violated. The male and female students at my urban university, children of blue-collar workers, now frequently regard marriage as a post-career, post-life-style choice and reject all alternatives to personal autonomy. Of course there has always been disaffection and generational struggle in the family, but under an organic model people sought informal resolutions within the institution. Now that individuals have discovered their own separate existence in relation to it, and begun to assert claims to privacy, individual rights, and legal redress, they demand institutional recognition of separateness or opt to remove themselves altogether.

The voluntarism of Western culture, then, has pervaded the last authoritarian institution in liberal society. The traditional family has become the permissive, child-centered family, lifelong marriage a series of continual renegotiations or realliances, and socialization a peer-group education with its implications of ultimate leveling. David Potter foresaw this transformation in *People of Plenty*:

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> . . . the authoritarian discipline of the child, within the authoritarian family, was but an aspect of the authoritarian social system that was linked with the economy of scarcity. Such a regime could never have sufficiently relaxed within the family so long as it remained diagnostic in the society. Nor could it have remained unmodified in the family, once society began to abandon it in other spheres.[9]

Explanations that seek to reassure us in the short run with claims of cultural manipulation or media exploitation of a non-issue fail to grasp the dynamics of liberal culture: once the groundwork has been laid by an overriding emphasis on voluntarism, a perception of new options will be sufficient to produce new patterns of behavior.

For this reason, ironically, debates over the existence of a crisis, no less than disclaimers of media hyperbole, by reinforcing the view that the traditional presumptions regarding the role of the family in one's life have become a matter for dispute, further alert the public to new desires and possibilities. Whatever the original cause or the exacerbating factors now present, we must acknowledge the actual issue before us: how to cope with a culture in which the actualization of individual choice has become the primary standard of success and the legitimate solution to all personal dissatisfaction. The crisis of the family is really the crisis of the culture itself.

V

Despite this experience by many Americans of a deteriorating family life and vast changes in the cultural perception of its structure, the maintenance of the present family arrangement remains the only serious viable alternative. The failure to consider alternatives stems not, I believe, from a feeling of confidence about the actual viability of the present structure, but from a fear of the great dislocations entailed by any significant withdrawal from the interdependence of primary associations. While placing uncompromised importance on the role of autonomy and initiative in social life, liberals never considered how the structure of the family would meet the increasingly consensual parent-child relation and the increasing assertiveness and independence of the young in a way that ensured stable socialization and social order.

What reforms will reestablish a healthy socialization process? Or how can the traditional family be reconstituted if we accept a lessened standard of parental commitment? And how might society retain its necessary cohesion if we establish voluntarist norms for the young?

We must recognize here that the greatest challenge to liberal society will come not from the demands made by women but from those on behalf of children. For women, like other adult victims of discrimination, can hold their own in the world of the voluntarist ethic. Because of children's evident lack of such capacity, however, the mere extension of equality of rights and opportunities cannot effectively integrate them within democratic society nor satisfy the nurturing needs associated with growth and development. The noted legal scholar Thomas I. Emerson explained:

> The extreme individualistic approach embodied in our legal system plainly raises some special problems when applied to children. Our law, as we have developed it, assumes the existence of an individual citizen who is mature, autonomous, responsible, and possessed of the capacity to make decisions. Those conditions do not exist, or exist to a lesser degree, when children are involved.[10]

This legal model of individual autonomy, which serves as the operational basis of liberal voluntarism, fails to provide any clear guidelines for the role of children. Thus even the liberalization of the family, if ultimately chosen, would require a complete revision of liberal theory. For this reason, in Emerson's view, the questions raised by the children's issue "go to the heart of our social order."[11]

Because of our reluctance to confront this issue we continue unproductively to seek the source of the erosion of the family in such causes as weak fathers, the women's movement, peer-group influence, the evolution of mass society, the media, and the rise of the "helping professions." We mourn the decline of paternal authority and urge its public

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recreation. There have been proposals to impose artificial constraints upon the young—by such means as military or government service or survival courses—to counter the voluntarism produced by the reduction of economic restraint. All these efforts (including the Reagan administration's policy initiatives), which seek the artificial restoration of authority, fail to address the underlying problem.

We shall not in fact begin to resolve this crisis until we recognize the ever deepening isolation of the authority-centered family from other institutions of liberal society. The liberalization and humanization of the family occurred because it accorded with the values by which most Americans live. No one expected the young or adults within the family context to take such advantage of the reduction of restraints; nevertheless, they have. Every adult pursuit of personal fulfillment at the expense of parental responsibility legitimates that behavior to the young and erodes the institution's stability. The children, having learned their lesson, respond with an independent, increasingly desocialized youth culture.

In this context, what would happen if (arguendo) divorce laws were abolished? Would this result in stronger families and more intimate communication in every case—or also in bigamy, adultery, and for many an outright rejection of marriage? Given the unrestrained preeminence of the voluntaristic ethic, its curtailment in the family setting would require a massive repeal of liberalized divorce laws, punishment for abandonment and "swinging," the return to traditional treatment of women and children, censorship, and the public scrutiny of private commitment.

Few, in fact, would favor proceeding this way, because it is a cardinal belief in our culture that *the only effective solution to the problems of voluntarism is more voluntarism*. How many of us would deny some need for autonomy within the family, or question the right of society to intervene in order to prevent abuse in the home? Would we consciously adopt a policy that abandons runaways to their own devices or offers them on their capture only penal sanctions or a return to the situation from which they have fled? Will we tell the children of parents consumed with their own problems that they don't need independent assistance in the divorce court, mothers with live-in friends that they must in all cases relinquish their children, pregnant minors that they must—if their parents insist—bear children when they don't want them and can't care for them? Yet, once we seek the remedy of courts and collective standards, we have set in motion the voluntarization of the family.

VI

American society, by liberalizing the universities, secondary schools, and draft system (permanently?) in response to youth pressure, has already largely surrendered absolute authority outside the family. Curfew laws were deemed unenforcible, child obscenity-law age limits lowered, and runaways treated as a social rather than a criminal problem. There are initial signs of such a response to the family crisis itself: the proliferation of family therapies seeking to enhance the possibility of communication, consensus, and a respect for differences within the institution; a resort to official interference by the courts and public agencies; and extensive family education in schools at all grade levels to prepare children for a greater voice at home.

While these efforts do proceed from a belief in the need for greater voluntarism in the family setting, they have to this point ignored the fragmenting impact of such reforms on the traditional operation of the family. Ultimately, there will be the necessity of some political effort to provide alternative structures that can accommodate the cultural shift toward adult voluntarism. They must further be designed to teach the young the skills connected with the exercise of autonomy, initiative, and democratic participation.

When we can admit that we face novel and uncharted questions, this acknowledgment of the public investment in socialization will, by reversing the present posture of inaction,

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enable us to begin the process of social research and development. It will be necessary to allocate funds for the creation and evaluation of model experimental projects involving alternative forms of nonauthoritarian child care and new communities for the young. Child-development research will have to be conducted to find alternative ways of providing for children's basic psychosocial needs. And while we ought to retain a healthy suspicion about the government's intrusion in these matters, let us also recognize that it is precisely because of our commitment to human autonomy that we must choose to act with common counsel.

This, then, is where we are being led. Because the cultural dynamic shows no sign of abatement, the American people are being forced to come to terms with the consensual family by individual actions in their daily lives. Whether we shall soon be provided with any support from our public representatives may well determine the success of that enterprise.

Notes

[1] A. Etzioni, Editorial, *Science*, April 29, 1977, p. 487.

[2] *Marvin v. Marvin*, 18 Cal.3d 660, 665, 557 P.2d 106, 109, 134 Cal. Rptr. 815, 818 (1976).

[3] *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*, 428 U.S. 52, 74 (1975).

[4] *Roe v. Doe*, 29 N.Y.2d 188, 191, 272 N.E.2d 567, 568, 324 N.Y.S.2d 71, 72 (1971).

[5] J. Goldstein, A. Freud, and A. Solnit, *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child* (New York: Free Press, 1973).

[6] *In the Welfare of Cynthia Nell Synder*, 85 Wash.2d 182, 186, 532 P.2d 278, 281 (1975), en banc.

[7] K. Keniston and The Carnegie Council on Children, *All Our Children* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 76.

[8] Andrew Hacker, "Divorce à la Mode," *New York Review of Books*, May 3, 1979, p. 27.

[9] David M. Potter, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press/Phoenix, 1954), p. 204.

[10] Thomas I. Emerson, "Rights of Minorities and Children: The Limits of the Legal Process," *New York University Law Review*, vol. 53, pp. 1240, 1243 (1978).

[11] Ibid., p. 1244. □

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Leo P. Ribuffo

Monkey Trials, Past and Present

Contrary to nearly universal expectation, the suit against the State of California's Board of Education by Kelly Segraves, a fundamentalist foe of evolution, did not turn into a repeat performance of the Scopes "monkey trial" of 1925. Nevertheless, systematic comparison of the two proceedings is useful. Their differences highlight the ways in which fundamentalism has evolved, so to speak, since the 1920s.

Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes was a model of what a trial ought not to be. The chief prosecutor wanted simply to show that John Thomas Scopes, a high school teacher in Dayton, had violated the Butler Act, which banned from public schools "any theory" contrary to the "story of Creation as taught in the Bible." But the volunteer assistant prosecutor, William Jennings Bryan, preferred to put evolution itself on trial. Defense counsel, led by the agnostic Clarence Darrow, eagerly obliged. Barred from bringing expert witnesses to demonstrate that evolution was sound science and not necessarily incompatible with Christianity, Scopes's lawyers called Bryan to testify as an authority on Scripture. Under Darrow's examination, he wavered between endorsements of biblical literalism and concessions that the six "days" of creation might have lasted millions of years. Scopes, almost lost in the scuffle, was convicted and fined $100.

Unlike Scopes, who had reluctantly joined a test case, Kelly Segraves willingly filed suit on behalf of his three children, students in the San Diego public schools. Segraves shared with Bryan the belief that evolution undermined Scripture and thus threatened morality. "If you teach man is an animal," he testified at the recent trial in Sacramento, "then there is no right and wrong." The organization Segraves directs, the Creation Science Research Center, promotes Genesis at the expense of Darwin; in 1975, he had unsuccessfully urged the California Board of Education to adopt some of his publications as supplementary science texts.

Although Segraves inherited many traits from his theological progenitors, he also shows that fundamentalists, in their struggle for existence, have changed to fit their environment. Important adaptive variations include protective coloration (such as the designation "*scientific* creationist") and improved capacity to seize legal turf. Segraves was represented by Richard Turner, an attorney far shrewder than Bryan. Turner repudiated any "shootout" between science and religion, prudently deleted one of his client's original complaints that California promoted "secular humanism," and denied seeking "equal time" for Genesis in science classes. In order to protect the faith of Segraves's children, however, evolution must be taught as a hypothesis. "The real issue," Turner told the court, was "religious freedom" guaranteed by the First Amendment.

Segraves's suit centered on what presiding Judge Irving H. Perluss called a "matter of semantics." Perluss himself was largely responsible for the narrow focus. He warned participants and observers against a "media performance," excluded testimony on the merits of evolution versus "creationism," and considered only whether the plaintiff's "religious liberties are offended." Where Bryan and Darrow debated matters of ultimate concern, Turner and Deputy Attorney General Robert Tyler bickered about state memoranda.

Under pressure from fundamentalists, the State of California's Board of Education in 1973 had required texts and teachers to treat evolution as "theory . . . not fact." "Dogmatism" was to be replaced by "conditional statement" where "speculation" was offered about the origins of life. While allowing discussions of the "creationist" view-

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point, former board president Marion Drinker testified, members had preferred these to occur in social science courses. The board's professed policy had been ignored, Turner protested, citing the state's Department of Education guidelines issued in 1978, which had excluded from the "realm of science" any philosophical or religious discussion of the "origin, meaning, and value of life." Segraves's 13-year-old son, Kasey, testified that his biology teacher had said—without reservation—that mankind was descended from "amoebas, reptiles, and apes."

Both the Scopes and Segraves cases ended in anticlimax. The Butler Act might have been upheld by the United States Supreme Court, which did not until 1948 extend to the states the First Amendment ban on "an establishment of religion." But the final verdict in the Scopes case was handed down at Nashville, not Washington, in 1927. The State of Tennessee's Supreme Court, while reversing Scopes's conviction on the grounds that the trial judge (not the jury) had assessed his fine, pointedly advised the state to enter a *nolle prosequi* in this "bizarre case." The issue of evolution in public schools did not reach the United States Supreme Court until 1968, when the ruling in *Epperson* v. *Arkansas* invalidated a 1928 state law adapted from the Butler Act. In an opinion written by Justice Abe Fortas, the Court decided that Arkansas, which proscribed Darwinism for the "sole reason" that it conflicted "with a particular interpretation of the Book of Genesis by a particular religious group," thereby violated the First Amendment.

In Sacramento, Judge Perluss ruled on March 6 that California provided "sufficient accommodation for the views" of Segraves and his coreligionists; the 1973 Board of Education policy statement needed wider circulation, however. Any attempt to provide classroom "equal time" for "scientific creationism," he added, would violate the First Amendment. Finally, Perluss speculated that Segraves's suit had advanced "understanding."

Both the Scopes and Segraves cases elicited copious, if largely superficial, coverage. Most newspaper accounts of the proceedings at Dayton portrayed a symbolic confrontation between learning and ignorance, with a prurient emphasis on the latter. It was "better than a circus," commented H. L. Mencken. The press reported, for example, that a Coney Island zoo had offered its prize chimpanzee to the prosecution. No chimp reached network television during the Segraves suit but, as persistent references to the new "monkey trial" suggest, glibness was at a premium. Lacking a courtroom showdown, ABC-TV's *Nightline* arranged a verbal shootout between science and religion, personified respectively by the astronomer Carl Sagan and the Far Right evangelist James Robison. According to the Reverend Robison, outdated science books looked "more ridiculous" than comic books. Equally zealous, Sagan warned that "creationism," based on an "authoritarian text," was "exceptionally dangerous" to American survival because students in other countries (unspecified but easily interpolated by the audience) were seriously pursuing science.

Media monkey business has obscured the hard questions in both the Scopes and Segraves cases. First, how much should laymen defer to science and to the experts who interpret it? The Enlightenment *philosophe* could plausibly claim mastery of both "natural philosophy" and "moral philosophy"—Newton's physics as well as Montesquieu's statecraft. Although much of what he mastered turned out to be wrong, the 18th-century thinker at least enjoyed the luxury of making his own mistakes. Today, except for few polymaths, we increasingly defer to scientific experts.

This deference should worry even those of us unconvinced by Bryan that evolution consists of a "million guesses." Scientific errors, after all, are more dangerous than comic books. The text used by Scopes, for example, incorporated the prevailing opinion that "Caucasians" stood at the peak of evolution; one of Darrow's prospective witnesses, Henry Fairfield Osborn of the Museum of Natural History, believed that prehistoric forebears of Jews, blacks, and Orientals were inferior to proto-Anglo-Saxons swinging from neighboring trees. In addition, as Bryan often complained, "survival of the fittest" was appropriated by Social Darwinists to justify sweatshops and child labor.

Human error did not cease with the 1920s and, notwithstanding the State of California's Department of Education guidelines, science continues to intersect with judgments regarding the value and meaning of life. Indeed, scientists themselves continue to pontificate about matters outside their competence. The problem is not so apparent when Carl Sagan sketches a comfortably progressive cosmos. Yet Edward Teller moves easily from building nuclear weapons to giving advice about their deployment. William Shockley invokes science to charge that the "major cause of American Negro inferiority is racially genetic." Sociobiologists dedicated to dismantling the welfare state echo Social Darwinists who opposed its creation a

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century ago. Recognition that scientists err, and that popularizers compound their errors, does not mean that we should shun Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and cleave unto Genesis; but it may help us to understand fundamentalists who do so.

IF IDEAS CAN BE HARMFUL as well as mistaken, why should they not be banned, at least in certain contexts (the goal of the Butler Act) or denied legitimacy (the goal of Segraves's suit)? Fundamentalist leaders not only sought such restrictions, but also stressed the particular vulnerability of children and adolescents to pernicious notions. Bryan recalled during the Scopes trial that Darrow had saved Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb from execution by pleading that these young murderers had been corrupted by Nietzsche's philosophy. This argument, though an oversimplification, became a fundamentalist staple; so did the image of the sobbing father whose child returned from school committed to evolution instead of to God.

The cosmopolitan response to the argument that ideas can be dangerous has traditionally mixed inconsistency, disingenuousness, and naiveté. For instance, many reformers appalled by the Butler Act in 1925 had themselves recently banned German-language periodicals (World War I suppression had helped to inspire the fundamentalist legislative assaults on evolution). Other liberals and radicals oscillated between minimizing the impact of ideas and assuming that the impact was beneficial. Life was "full of awakenings," Darrow told the Tennessee Supreme Court, "and every child ought to be more intelligent than his parents."

Bryan's fundamentalist critique of pure tolerance cannot be dismissed so easily. At Dayton, Darrow operated under two appealing but dubious liberal assumptions: first, that the world was improving, and second, that worthy ideas would attract the most customers in the intellectual marketplace. His optimism was unwarranted. Even so, there remains no responsible alternative to promoting maximum freedom of expression. Yet because freedom entails risks, its advocates must be prepared to *argue* the case for tolerance instead of reciting incantations about "life's awakenings."

This second basic issue in the Scopes and Segraves trials, the power of ideas for good and ill, converges with a third: to what extent should public education in a democracy reflect the values of the electorate? At Dayton, Bryan wrote, he was fighting for the "*right* of the people . . . to control the schools which they *create* and *support*." Treading the same path, legislators in a dozen states recently introduced bills requiring instruction in alternate "theories" of human origin, and on March 20 Governor Frank White of Arkansas signed one of them into law. South Dakota, Idaho, and Indiana have placed "creationist" textbooks on state-approved lists. These measures would have amused H. L. Mencken, who perversely granted citizens the "clear right" to protect their "progeny . . . from whatever knowledge violated their superstitions."

Yet this "clear right" is limited by the First Amendment prohibition on "an establishment of religion." The range of this restriction remains unclear, to say the least; U.S. Supreme Court opinions are marked by confusion, by shifting definitions of "religion" and "establishment," and by slippery efforts to balance individual conscience and compelling social need. Writing a grudging concurrence in *Epperson* v. *Arkansas*, for example, Justice Hugo Black wondered whether the Court, by forbidding Arkansas to exclude Darwinism from its schools, was infringing upon the "religious freedom of those who consider evolution an antireligious doctrine."

Despite all these difficulties, Judge Perluss was correct in doubting the constitutionality of classroom "equal time" for "creationism." The Bible may be discussed in public schools, of course, but the sociological and historical approach apparently endorsed by the California Board of Education satisfies few "creationists" (many of whom consider Scriptural "higher criticism" a mutant offspring of Darwinism). Rather, "creationist" leaders are seeking government moral and financial support for a sectarian interpretation of Genesis, an interpretation, moreover, disputed by a majority of Christians.

At the same time, the First Amendment does protect those "creationists" who in private academies teach that evolution is an agency of Satan. In *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), the U.S. Supreme Court allowed an Old Amish family, whose faith was much farther than fundamentalism from the religious "mainline," to remove its son and daughter from public school after the eighth grade. In addition to affirming the "primary" parental role in child-rearing, the Court decided that public education would impose "psychological conflicts" on the Amish children while "gravely" endangering Amish communal solidarity and piety.

DISAGREEMENT OVER THE ROLE of public education is as old as public education itself. Viewed historically, the fundamentalist complaint that schools

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threaten their children's values has an ironic ring. During most of our history, these institutions forced other people's children to adopt such evangelical Protestant values as ethnic acculturation, routinized work, and "100 percent Americanism." Segraves undoubtedly accepts this legacy of social control without a second thought. He did not, after all, file a joint suit with Quakers and Jehovah's Witnesses whose "religious freedom" might be violated by classroom celebrations of American military prowess.

Legal questions, however complicated, concerning democracy and education are less knotty than the accompanying ethical issues. A recognition that families may indeed be torn apart by sophomore biology—and the values it symbolizes—helps us to understand that fundamentalist protest, though often emotional, is not necessarily irrational. Even Darrow professed sympathy for the father whose child returned from school reborn a Darwinian.

Still, children also have feelings and rights, including the right to be different from if not invariably "more intelligent than" their parents. Because minors cannot vote and rarely enter constitutional litigation, they exercise scant influence on school boards, legislatures, or (as Justice William O. Douglas complained, dissenting in *Yoder v. Wisconsin*) the Supreme Court. In this dissent, Douglas hesitated to bar a child "forever" from "entry into the new and amazing world of diversity that we have today." Are rights denied to the fundamentalist youth, sent by his parents to a "creationist" school, who, like Douglas's hypothetical Amish, might want to become an "astronaut or an oceanographer"?

In his ruling on March 6, Judge Perluss tried to balance academic standards, cultural pluralism, and the feelings of the proverbial parent whose offspring might stray from Genesis to evolution. The ramifications of his decision remain uncertain, partly because the school board policy he deemed "adequate" was murky to begin with.

The board's rejection of "dogmatism" may allow teachers to present evolution as the best scientific "model" as long as they do not ridicule or penalize dissenting pupils. This was the practice of Robert Horn, a biology instructor named California teacher of the year in 1975, who testified for the state in the Segraves case. Horn allowed students openly to disagree with him, with some quoting passages from the Bible. Managed by a capable teacher, this compromise can be educational as well as constitutional. Indeed, the notorious "secular humanist" John Dewey warned against educational dogmatism, and 60 years of ridicule have served primarily to fuel fundamentalist militancy.

Furthermore, Horn's compromise advances the good cause of discouraging fundamentalist flight to sectarian academies. On the one hand, these devout Protestants will receive a better education in public schools; on the other hand, nonfundamentalists will profit from contact with them. Perhaps the next generation of sociologists, historians, and civil liberties lawyers will not consider evangelical Christians an exotic species of suspicious origin.

Yet Perluss's ruling may not produce such happy results. The judge's overflowing empathy opens all sorts of possibilities. Could a Christian Scientist, for example, convince the California Board of Education that existence of the material world, hitherto considered a "fact" in physics courses, must now be demoted to "theory"? Segraves's science adviser, Robert Kofahl, regards Perluss's verdict as an "opening wedge" in the campaign to pry evolution out of American minds, and Segraves himself plans to escalate efforts to place Creation Science Research Center material in the public schools.

The case called "Scopes II" by the press may be followed by "Scopes III," "Scopes IV," and so on. The ultimate consequences of Segraves's suit depend largely on the response of political and theological liberals. They should lobby and, where appropriate, file suit against "creationist" textbooks and "equal time" for Genesis. Although fundamentalists have evolved into shrewder political animals since the 1920s, many of their recent victories have occurred only because their opponents are in hibernation. □

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Stephen Roane

Diatribe on Doctors

I am holding what our Chinese friends would call a "Speak Bitterness Meeting" with my typewriter. The subject of my bitterness is Doctors; Medical Doctors, "Doctors Doctors." Doctors, as a group, are no better, certainly no better, but also no worse than any other group of human beings. There are good and devoted Doctors, there are bad Doctors little better than medical racketeers, and there are the great majority who are somewhere in between. It's our economic system that brings out the worst. Under our system the economically strong exploit and mercilessly plunder the economically weak. And who is stronger than those who have the power, real or imaginary, of life or death, sickness or health over us?

The question of why medical costs have shot up so much more than other costs is papered over with pieties to avoid mentioning the unmentionable and thus offending our new priestly caste, and their trade union, the AMA. The reason is clear: Doctors are ripping off a bigger and bigger chunk of the national wealth. They do this by raising their fees unconscionably, and by increasing the occasions for which fees may be charged, such as forcing a patient to come to their office when information in a telephone conversation would suffice. . . .

But it is in the hospital that they really get their hooks in. The good Doctor sticks his head in the door of the patient's room every day, and says "How are yuh?" If he's really conscientious he may even feel your pulse. For each of these "visits" he will charge a spanking fee. It's perfectly legal. Blue Shield will pay. Less legal but just as remunerative is the practice of the Private Doctor charging for all kinds of procedures actually performed by hospital personnel. In another industry this would be known as fraud. All this—together with fat salaries and "percs" paid to hospital executives, and unbelievable inefficiency and bureaucratism—leads to inflated health care costs. Clearly, as Clemenceau would say: "Health is too serious a matter to be left in the hands of the doctors." Specialization is another gimmick in the medical ripoff. There are no ordinary Doctors anymore (they used to be called "general practitioners"), at least outside of rural areas. They now are "internists" (up go the fees). They examine you, and if they find anything beyond a cold or a bellyache, they refer you to *another* specialist. Now watch the fees!

The medical societies, of course, like other trade associations, make no attempt to place any tolerable ceilings on fees; that would be "interference with free enterprise." They content themselves with lobbying vigorously against anyone else, governmental or private, who may try to limit fees. This comes under the heading of preventing interference with the sacred "Doctor-Patient relationship," which permits doctors to charge what the customer can't bear. So the societies are on the alert against fee-cutting as unfair competition. Beyond that, they content themselves with spreading blood-chilling lies about the British National Health, which has succeeded in raising life expectancy so dramatically, although it has not done so much for Doctors' incomes.

But all this has to do just with money. What of science? The first thing that strikes the eye is that Doctors, like all priesthoods, have developed arcane words for ordinary things. Among other terms are "eredema" for little red spots, "cardiac infarction" for heart attack, "edema" for a collection of body fluids, and so on . . . Some medical terminology is doubtless useful to express medical concepts with precision. Most could be expressed in simple English.

Of course, medical research is being done by physicians and others (Pasteur and Fleming can be counted among the "others"). This for the most part is true science and not the subject of the present discussion. Here we are speaking of medical practice, clinical practice.

There are two general methods used by most Doctors, usually in some combination: the cookbook method, and the cut-and-try, or witch-doctor, method. The cookbook method is a more sophisticated version of the medicine practiced by the old whaling-ship skippers. They were out to sea a long time. So they were given a cabinet of medicines in bottles labeled with numbers from one through whatever. Along with the cabinet came a manual listing various imfirmities such as bellyaches, coughs, and

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convulsions, together with prescribed dosages: two tablespoons a day from bottle no. 7, and so on. And the skipper would so prescribe.

The more detailed and precise modern equivalent is the *Merck Manual*, a tome that permits any idiot to practice medicine, provided he has a license. It is conveniently arranged with little tabs. A doctor has only the time it takes for the patient to get dressed and come into the office to compose and deliver his wisdom. "You have what looks like a case of Logos on the Bogos. I think we should start you on a 20 mg dose of ipso-ipecac. Better make that 25mg." And—"Of course, we will need the results of the blood test for confirmation." A good hedge. Merck is not infallible.

But what did Doctors do before the publication of the *Merck Manual*? That brings us back to our old friend, the witch doctor, and the cut-and-try method. The witch doctor was not a complete fool. He had no license, so he had to produce a reasonable number of cures or his witch doctorhood was at an end. He and his daddy or granddaddy had accumulated some rough statistics that told them a certain herb would reduce fevers or cure sores or whatever in 30 or 40 or 50 percent of the cases. When accompanied by the appropriate mutterings, of course. Asked how these medicines worked, he could give a perfectly coherent explanation involving the interaction between the Sun God and the Rain God, and so forth. Curiously enough, many of these same jungle medicines, being of real value, are still in use. Only the mutterings have changed.

When our witch doctor next appears he has shed his nose bone and appears in the Victorian clothes of a Harley Street practitioner. Perhaps he's not a doctor at all, but an actor appearing in the G.B. Shaw play *A Doctor's Dilemma*. Remember the famous trio? The first felt all could be set right by removal of the "nuceiform sac." The second was for "stimulating the phagocytes." The third, with a poor clientele, expounded on the curative powers of greengage plums.

Well, again, not much has changed. There is, of course, no such thing as a "nuceiform sac." And green-gage plums have lost in popularity to cranberry juice and Vitamin C pills. Stimulating the phagocytes has in many instances given way to unstimulating them. Of course, the witch-doctor school had its faults, the most serious being a too universal application of a remedy. Thus, up to less than a century ago, you or I would have been bled to death if all else failed. Dr. Benjamin Rush, the father of American medicine, was great on bleeding. To be fair, it should be said that Doctors have abandoned this procedure in the intervening years. Other than that, things have remained about the same.

Well, what about the famous "Doctor-Patient Relationship" celebrated in song, story, AMA propaganda, and *Dr. Marcus Welby*? The wise old family doctor, listening to your troubles, giving homely common-sense advice, mopping your fevered brow. . . . Rubbish! I have a modest suggestion. The term "Doctor-Patient Collection-Agency Relationship." Because that's where most doctors will send your bills if they are unpaid for a couple of months. . . .

SO, "WHAT IS TO BE DONE?" Well, the first step is, obviously, to socialize medicine, and remove its practice from the realm of "free enterprise." Doctors should be paid salaries, good professional-type salaries, but their practice should be "businessized." With the financial aspect removed, doctors might be freer to keep their minds on medicine in a more objective way. Group clinics—where specialists to the extent that they are needed can be consulted on a patient's problems—is an idea whose time has come. Some mechanism must be found to encourage good Doctors, discipline bad Doctors, and help mediocre Doctors to improve. This, however, must be done by the Doctors themselves. They must first abandon their medieval guild psychology. How to make medical practice more scientific, less benighted by cant, is a more complicated problem. Layers of centuries-old customs, folkways, feudal and prefeudal attitudes, and psychology must somehow be abandoned. Change to a more rational organization of medicine can be accomplished by public demand, but for the other problems the prescription must be Shakespeare's "Physician heal thyself."

How shall I end this "diatribe"? Suggest a national health plan, and a whole series of other plans? But can we end human greed? Will folly cease? Will sickness and death disappear from the earth? Perhaps I should end with the words of the old man who wrote so long ago before the salvations—those of Marx, or Freud, or Jesus. He stared out over the desert and he wrote, "One generation passes away, and another generation comes, and the thing that has been, it is that which shall be, and that which is done, is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun." □

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Rose G. Lewis

Can Israel Be a Mideast Country?

Israel is, of course, Semitic. It is rooted in the Middle East. Its population is, in a steadily growing majority, non-European. Yet Israel is perceived—by itself as well as by others—to be a European nation. That this should be so, more than three decades after the achievement of Israeli independence, suggests a singular rigidity in both Arab and Israeli thinking.

Israel as a European nation is the central myth of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Like most myths, it is not entirely untrue. But it also is not altogether true. A historical examination of the Middle East would show, at the very least, a more complex picture.

The power of myth rests not upon factual accuracy but upon symbolic expression. Just as the identification of Israel with Europe serves as a keystone of Arab dogma, so the European connection is central to Israeli ideology, civic practice, national self-awareness.

Unhappily, this fundamental Arab-Israeli "agreement" blocks any further agreement. Both sides proceed from this common ground to positions so widely separate that communication is virtually impossible. If the Israelis find their "root and legitimation" in a European past, then the Arabs see the consequent needs of the Jewish people as no proper moral or political concern of theirs.

Clearly, Mideast peace would require mutual adjustment on cognitive as well as territorial borders. One can only imagine such change, however, on some common historical terrain, in a vocabulary of common experience and memory. It is unfortunate, therefore, that both Israelis and Arabs ignore the post-Biblical history of the Middle East. Yet it is these years that might give the independence of Israel a political legitimacy, with roots in the historic consciousness of both peoples.

Is it possible that continued Egyptian-Israeli contact may encourage more curiosity about Arab-Jewish relations *before* Zionism? Can the image of Israel change, at long last? And would it make a difference?

From the start, the Arabs have viewed Israel as a foreign body arbitrarily grafted upon their world. This bitter conviction feeds their faith that, in the manner of foreign bodies in alien environments, Israel must, sooner or later, be expelled or overcome.

This Arab gospel does not altogether forget Mideast Jewry. The Jewish presence is frequently called upon to testify to an alleged Muslim innocence of any oppression that might suggest moral claims against Arab society. What is painted instead is a double image. Although Jews are indigenously visible in bright pictures of Arab tolerance, they are nowhere to be found on the landscapes of self-government. And so peace with Israel, even when conceivable, is at best an act of generosity to a stranger. "We welcome you to live amongst us," said Anwar Sadat to the Jews in Jerusalem, begging the question of historic rights and leaving Arabs still resentful and Israelis still insecure.

Patently, a Middle East without Jews is a historical absurdity. Long after the seventh century, A.D., the time of the Arabs' conquests, some 90 percent of the world's Jews continued to live under Islam. Their homeland was occupied, their lands were expropriated. Their communities, in and out of Palestine, were ruled by a succession of Muslim despots. Even if Arab imperialism had in fact been as benevolent as is claimed, it would still not follow that Jewry in the Middle East does not in this century, like other subjugated peoples, have the right to freedom.

To forestall such logic, Arabs tell themselves that the Jews do not really constitute a nation or a people, but only a religion. This, however, according to the political theory and practice of Islam itself is a distinction without a difference. In Muslim countries, people have always lived by their religious identities. Territorial nationalism is a European idea, and the separation of church and state a Christian precept. Indeed, in nothing is Israel less Western today, and more recognizably Mideastern, than in its tenacious religious orientation.

For the subjugated Mideastern peoples who resisted conversion to Islam, their religion has always been, in effect, their nation. Their names often said as much, as in the official designation of such Christian groups as the Greek, Armenian, and Frankish (meaning Roman Catholic) nations. But it was religion that united them, gave them their collective symbols and loyalties. Islamic governments, moreover, went to great pains to enforce religious separation. They required that non-Muslims keep themselves conspicuously lab-

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eled at all times. Special clothing and colors, special limitations of public behavior, special marks of status and rules of obligation all served to keep religious minorities firmly within their own communions and outside the majority society. The yellow Jewish badge, as it happens, was an Arab innovation. The Christian color was blue.

It cannot seriously be supposed that such a caste system would have produced a tolerant, let alone an egalitarian, society. Nor was that its intention. The system was designed, on the contrary, to preserve Muslim supremacy and to demean and exploit the unbeliever. That this plain historical fact is so often obscured is testament to the singular influence that, with regard to the Middle East, 19th-century Romanticism continues to exert upon the 20th-century imagination.

The principle of religious separatism was also fundamental to the political organization of the Islamic state. Denominational autonomy was both practice and law—a very circumscribed autonomy, to be sure. The Jewish communities, like the Christian, were permitted their own internal organization and regulation, their own schools and religious courts. In a bargain they couldn't refuse, they agreed to pay for their "protection" with obedience and humility and perpetual tribute. They had neither the right nor the means to defend themselves, being expressly forbidden to bear arms or to strike Muslims. Inevitably, and in spite of some legal rights, their status of inferiority invited popular intolerance, contempt, attack.

Thus the Jewish people existed in the Muslim empires as a corporate entity with defined political status, rights, and obligations. It was this entity that signed treaties of capitulation with the Arabs and was responsible for their observance. This entity collected taxes, administered civil regulations, was held accountable for the conduct of the collectivity, formally represented its members, and negotiated for them in the councils of empire and government, occasionally even with foreign powers.

Under the Ottomans, the autonomous Jewish and Christian communities were known as *millets*. The word, significantly, is derived from the Arabic word *milla*, which means both *religion* and *nation*. This history of the Islamic millet system, among other factors, led the English historian James Parkes to observe that, far from being an alien intrusion, the national independence of Israel in the 20th century is in fact a normal development. The Jewish millet or nation of scattered communities, always an essential part of the region, has now simply come back together into a state.

SEVERAL HISTORIC FORCES uprooted the ancient Jewish communities of the Middle East, and Zionism was the least of them. Far more responsible were Western ideas, European colonialism, and Arab nationalism. Together, these combined to destroy the old millet system of the Ottoman empire and made new political arrangements both necessary and inevitable.

To the Jews of Africa and Asia, the intrusion of the West brought the beginnings of emancipation. Nineteenth-century European and American travelers have left letters and memoirs describing mistreatment of Jews in the Arab lands. With the spread of European influence and law, the Jews began to enjoy civil rights, citizenship, and freedoms that had been impossible under Muslim rule.

In Palestine, the establishment of a British consulate in 1838 offered the Jewish population for the first time the promise of protection against arbitrary abuse. Karl Marx, writing in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1854, was still able to note that "nothing equals the misery and the sufferings of the Jews at Jerusalem, inhabiting the most filthy quarter of the town . . . the constant objects of Mussulman oppression and intolerance, insulted by the Greeks, persecuted by the Latins. . . ." Once offered a wider margin for safety and dignity, the Jerusalem community grew so rapidly that by 1872—well before Zionist immigration—Jews outnumbered the combined Muslim and Christian populations of the city.

For the Arabs, of course, European imperialism was another dislocation. The shock was not imperialism itself since that, after all, had been the accepted system of Muslim government. The shock was that the imperialism was Christian and the imposed rules were alien. Among these, the sudden liberties now allowed the Jews appeared particularly galling in the light of the diminished status of the Arabs themselves.

But the Arabs did, nonetheless, adopt many Western ideas, including that of the territorially defined, secular nation-state. They imposed this 19th-century European concept somewhat shakily, however, upon their own traditional ideals concerning the political priorities of Islam, the unity of an ethnic Arab nation, and the predominance of a national culture of Arabism. The emergent although decentralized Arab nationalisms, inextricably intertwined with Islam, were a passionate mix of religion with culture, peoplehood, and land.

The Jews, many of them so recently liberated *from* Islam and Arabism, found themselves en-

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dangered as soon as the several Arab nations won their independence after World War II. Their old limited autonomy and legal protections were now gone, nor could they help accept once more the role of a restricted minority in Arab society. Suspicion and resentment were rife on both sides. To the Arabs, the Jews had become self-assertive, insolent. For the Jews, the Arab populations had a remembered reputation of fanaticism and violence from which their customary appeal in the past had been to Turkish, European, and other outside imperial authorities that were now gone.

So the Jews fled from the Muslim lands, with the encouragement of exclusionary regimes happy to see them go. However, most of these Jewish refugees remained in the Middle East. They simply moved to a now also independent Israel, where they have helped to strengthen a prevailing nationalist climate that similarly—in un-European fashion—is strongly religious and fundamentalist.

Within Israel, African and Asian Jews today make up well over half the Jewish population, at least half the Jewish electorate, and a steadily growing majority of Jewish youth. They visibly affect the Israeli economy, its culture, its style. In appearance and atmosphere, Israel today is increasingly a Mideastern country.

Despite their prominence, however, the Oriental Sephardic Jews are a poor and disadvantaged class in the country, troubled, among other things, by problems of pride and self-image. Many of them had been rural or mountain people in the Muslim countries, or had been isolated by extreme urban poverty from the opportunities of the short-lived European emancipation. They arrived in Israel some 30 years ago with the typical health, education, and economic problems of a deprived Mideastern population. Not surprisingly, they were soon submerged in the more assertive and advanced culture of the European Jews. And now, naturally, they are reacting to an awareness of their handicaps and to the inevitable alienation of their youth by calling upon the country to give equal time and notice to *their* history, *their* claims, *their* traditions.

It would seem, therefore, that the demonstrable needs of its own Sephardic majority, as well as the batterings of Muslim and Communist propaganda abroad, would have led Israel long ago to direct public attention to the political and social realities of the Arab-Jewish past. Israel has been seriously hurt by widespread charges of imperialism, colonialism, and racism, all of which rest upon the twin assumptions that Israelis have no native rights in the Middle East and no moral or political claims against the Arabs. Yet Israelis virtually never dispute these assumptions, no matter how vigorously they may object to the conclusions that follow. The case for Israel, put in terms of Jewish oppressions and needs, is usually grounded upon recollections of European happenings alone, with a bill of complaints only against the West and Christianity. The Oriental Jews continue to be the forgotten Semitic refugees, the overlooked Israelis.

This Israeli behavior seems self-defeating, yet it is seldom questioned or examined. But if one asks, *why?* the first response is likely to be, the Holocaust. The necessity to come to terms with an event so terrible has engendered a deep Jewish need to find some purpose in the suffering, some transcendent meaning to sustain confidence in a more promising future, perhaps even faith in a benevolent God. The achievement of Jewish freedom after so many centuries has provided such a purpose, particularly since Israeli independence came providentially soon after the unlocking of the concentration camps. Each individual gropes with the mystery in his own way, to be sure. But for Israel as a whole, the Holocaust has become the felt source of its legitimacy and ultimately the almost sacred symbol of national consciousness and will.

Shifting attention from Europe and the Holocaust, therefore, can seem threatening, even sacrilegious. To defend Israel's rights against a different background—to suggest, even, that another history may be of more weight to the world—appears to make light of wounds still bleeding.

And if there are many Jews to whom no further proof of Israel's right may in justice be asked, after the Holocaust, there are also many to whom no further proof can in conscience be required, after the word of God. For the fundamentalist Orthodox, the land of Israel has been divinely bestowed upon the Jewish people and the title deed lies in the eternally binding Torah itself. To look to worldly sources of legitimacy is irrelevant and mischievous, since the simple clarity of the Biblical doctrine can only be muddied by extraneous argument.

The Sephardic, Mideastern Jews tend to ascribe a good deal of Israel's insistent European emphasis to its politicians. The European Ashkenazic Jews,* although a minority, control the govern-

*There are, of course, some West European Sephardic Jews—descendants of the Jews of Spain who were expelled in 1492—who usually (ironically) hold high status in the Jewish communities.—Eds.

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ment. The Israeli political system is one in which party leaderships have been enabled to perpetuate themselves, thus creating an old guard that, it is asserted, is zealous to protect its own power. This has meant beating back challenges not only from Oriental "outsiders" but also from younger, native-born Israelis.

It is widely admitted that the Israeli Ashkenazim are inclined to look down upon African and Asian Jews, to disparage their culture and fear their influence. Some have openly worried that Israel might become a "Levantine" society, with all the word implies of backwardness, apathy, corruption. Westernizing the Oriental population has been viewed as a national priority, and for this purpose any educational or cultural Levantine orientation could only be a setback.

In the conduct of its foreign affairs, Israel has lined up with the West and sought actively to play the part of a recognized outpost of European and American interests. To be sure, its history forced Israel into an early reliance upon Europe, and Arab hostility has steadily reinforced the association. Eventually, and in part because it is after all a democracy with strong socialist leanings, Israel came to believe that its security lay within the duty, self-interest, and power of the democratic countries. On the one side, Arab enmity and exclusion have helped to keep Israel aligned with and dependent upon the West. On the other side, eager Israeli identification with foreign powers has served to strengthen the Arab stereotype.

THIS CIRCLE OF PERCEPTIONS is not easy to break out of. In the terms in which the Arab-Israeli argument has proceeded thus far, there seems little promise of change. Both peoples feel themselves bitterly aggrieved—but, it is important to note, rather less by each other than by European traumas: the Jews by their savage European persecutions, the Arabs by a high-handed European colonialism, which, after everything else, is demanding that they now submit to the payment of Europe's own bills.

With a change of venue to the historic grounds of the Middle East, however, the two Semitic peoples might, if they would, look at each other in a clearer light, against the background of their own relationships and mutual entitlements, rather than in the distorting shadow of the Europeans. Thirteen centuries (and more) of life together have left a complex record, of course. Opening the book now would surely expose a wide difference in point of view between the conquerors and the conquered. But at least there could be no infuriating questions about somebody else's bills, no outraged feelings of being innocent pawns in somebody else's games. Indeed, one frustrated Arab demand has always been that the problems of the region be considered against the perspectives of its own history and traditions. It is difficult to imagine that an Israel perceived as a Western enclave can ever be acceptable to them as a rightful part of the Middle East.

Yet neither the Arabs nor the Israelis are inclined to reexamine their ideologies and rhetoric for the sake of peace. Both now seem to be engaged in moving the conflict outright to a religious battlefield from which retreat can be cut off entirely. Their religions also show a strong family resemblance, and not least in their shared conviction of an eternal, covenanted trinity of God, People, and sacred Land. This was a frequent belief among the ancient Semitic peoples. Whether Islam appropriated the doctrine directly from Judaism or came to it out of an Arabian tradition, the fact remains that there is no room in orthodox Islam, either, for territorial compromise on land that, it declares, God took back from the Jews and gave to the Muslims.

The prospects for perceptual change seem fairly dim—unless, perhaps, a fresh viewpoint can be introduced by the Sephardic Jews themselves. They were once the Jewish majority and leadership in Palestine, they point out. But in this century they have for the most part been ignored, and they complain especially that they have never been helped to establish a visible international presence—in the United Nations, for example, where Oxford accents and South African and Polish connections have clearly not advanced Israel's cause. Nonetheless, although critical of the Ashkenazim, the Sephardic, Mideastern Jews tend to blame themselves as well for having withdrawn too easily from a struggle in which they might have played a central role.

It is significant, incidentally, that Arabs, too, often express resentment at the Israeli treatment of Mideast Jews. They see the disparagement as an extension of that general European contempt for Arabs and Arabism that has nourished their own smarting sense of racism. For example, Palestinian spokesman Edward Said, in his recent book *The Question of Palestine*, charges that the Occidental Israelis have become the oppressors of both Palestinian Arabs *and* Oriental Jews, and that Israel's achievements have been "on behalf of European Jews, less so for the Oriental majority." Such statements may be read as self-serving, but they do reflect a genuine feeling of offense and—

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perhaps more important—recognition of fellow Orientals.

Today the Mideast Jews are finally finding their voice in new organizations, in an awareness of their growing political strength, and in the assertive militance of their youth. Their new self-affirmation may possibly change the debate.

One of their most articulate spokesmen is Albert Memmi, sociologist and novelist, who was born and raised in a Tunisian ghetto. "What about us?" Memmi has asked bitterly.

> "Why shouldn't we submit our reckoning to the world? The Arabs were colonized, it is true. But weren't we? What have we been for centuries if not dominated, humiliated, threatened, and periodically massacred? And by whom? By the Muslim Arabs. . . .

Memmi is the author of *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, a popular Third World liberation text of the 1950s. He was active in the Tunisian nationalist movement, which, however, became openly Muslim and exclusionary once it had won independence.

> I regret nothing . . . [Memmi has written]. But it must be stated unequivocally, once and for all: we defended the Arabs because they were oppressed. But now . . . if they are no longer oppressed, if they are in turn becoming oppressors, or possess unjust political regimes, I do not see why they should not be called upon to render accounts. . . . The State of Israel is not the outcome only of the sufferings of European Jewry. . . . Today, as yesterday, our life is at stake. But there will come a day when the Muslim Arabs will have to admit that we, the "Arab Jews" as well—if that is how they wish to call us—have the right to existence and dignity.

Memmi states firmly, however, that

> It is now too late for us to become Arab Jews. . . . Never, I repeat, never—with the possible exception of two or three very specific intervals such as the Andalusian, and not even then—did the Jews in Arab lands live in other than a humiliated state, vulnerable and periodically mistreated and murdered, so that they should clearly remember their place.

Memmi is explicit in his definition of legitimate Jewish rights in the Middle East:

> As natives of those countries called Arab and indigenous to those lands well before the arrival of the Arabs, we shared with them to a great extent languages, traditions, and cultures. If one were to base oneself on this legitimacy, and not on force and numbers, then we have the same rights to our share in these lands—neither more nor less—as the Arab Muslims.

Another eloquent journalist and pamphleteer is from Egypt and uses the pen name of Bat Ye'or, which is Hebrew for Woman of the Nile. She finds that the deepest psychological root of the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in the collective image or stereotype, in the Arab-Islamic consciousness, of the native non-Muslim peoples, or *dhimmi*. After having been dispossessed of their rights by conquest in the *jihad*, or holy war, the dhimmi from then on were permanently degraded, held to be morally inferior, and condemned to live as subject peoples and landless nations once their homelands had been Arabized and Islamized:

> This political aspect of the *dhimmi* condition was at the root of the numerous bloody conflicts since the early 19th century, whenever *dhimmi* people fought to regain control of its national territory from Islamic domination, whether Ottoman or Arab, i.e., the Greeks, the Serbs, the Rumanians, the Bulgarians, the Maronites, the Armenians, and more recently the Jews.

This has been, claims Bat Ye'or (Giselle Littman), "one of the longest and most oppressive imperialisms of history." For the Arabs to recognize the right of national sovereignty of the Jewish people in its own land would be to acknowledge at last "that decolonization is a universal process applicable to Arabs also." Applauding Sadat's peace initiative she wrote: "Only a knowledge of history can help one understand that this gesture breaks with traditional attitudes of the past thirteen centuries."

Speaking for the recently formed World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries, Bat Ye'or said:

> For centuries, we kept silent when our human dignity and rights were flouted. . . . During those dark centuries, we lived as if we were blind so as not to see our disgrace, as if we were deaf so as not to hear endless insults. . . . The recovery of our historical identity and our moral dignity will enable us to start a dialogue with the Arab peoples, as free human beings and not as servile *dhimmis*. . . . This dialogue, although inspired by the lesson of the past, nonetheless points to a future of friendship and not of contempt, a future of peace and not of war. . . .

Clearly, this sort of talk puts a new drama on the stage. It challenges fixed assumptions, to include *all* the historic issues between Arabs and Jews.

Such a shift of viewpoint can hardly be expected magically to stop the conflict. But at the least it would introduce fresh currents of thought in a debate that now is bogged down in sterile repetition, intransigence, and escalating violence. It

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might offer this further hope: that it would throw open the question, for both Jews and Arabs, of whether Israel is not in fact today, and whether it must not of necessity continue to be in the future, a Mideastern and not a European country. □

Albert Memmi

The Orient: Myth and Reality

If we try to grasp the Orient, it trickles through our fingers like desert sand. What is the Orient? It is best described as the contrast of opposites: the Orient is what the Occident is not. Once again let's cite the differences: technology, religion, individualism, and so on.

The Occident's victory lies, of course, in the superiority of its technology and industrialization, its conquered world markets safeguarded by highly sophisticated weaponry and political domination—and the by-product, its triumphant culture. In regard to technological developments, centuries ago the East lapsed into a deep sleep.

Referring to this dichotomy, L. S. Senghor [the poet and political leader of Senegal] whom I esteem and value as a friend, magnifies it thus: rationality and efficiency on the one hand, the dream and a profound insight into the secrets of the soul on the other. Hence, the West can take pride in its power, the East in its spiritual gifts. This Manichaeism conveniently settles everything between the two sides.

Forgive me, Senghor, if I reply that your distinction is not serious and certainly not definitive. Not long ago I pointed out that there are no two ways of pouring cement. Yet the Orientals must find out exactly that; indeed, they are already doing it. As for their renowned secrets of the soul, these enigmas are like a phantom; try to seize it and it vanishes into thin air. I do not mean to imply that there is nothing apart from technical mastery, but neither is anything spiritual the sole prerogative of the Orientals. In the North and the West, mystics and Jewish Kabbalists have no less influence than their Mediterranean counterparts.

Arabs, Muslims, and Jews haven't always been drowsing. They invented algebra and the astrolabe. They mediated between the West and Greek philosophy, and their artisans ranked among the finest in the world.

The Orient is that which is not Christian. In the Orient, Christian Arabs, Copts, and Jews, wretched islets in a Muslim sea, don't count. This is certainly true; but where are the differences? Muslims prostrate themselves in prayer five times a day, but is this a specific difference? Of course, they have their own theology, but they don't burden themselves too much with doctrine. All the same, in practice a pious man is a pious man. Not exactly, some will retort. We must understand that theirs is not a religion like other religions, certainly not one like ours. Christianity is a tolerant, not a restrictive faith, while theirs commands everything and constrains the people. That's where it is backward.

But again, is this so strange? Didn't the Christian and Jewish religions in the past also rule over every aspect of life down to the smallest detail? In some areas they still do. But we find shifts in the realm of religion just as we find them in technology. Christianity, too, has had its woes trying to justify its philosophy. A prime example: the persecution of Galileo.

Now the Arab-Muslim world is beginning to stir again, to move ahead. The Iranian issue confuses more than it illuminates us. Let us, however, discard misleading evidence. It is not Islam that prevents the Muslims from progressing but rather the centuries of slumber induced by Islam. A backward mentality is not endemic to the character of the Muslim people, only to their history.

For the present, communal life dominates the Islamic countries. The plight of Muslim women is a good example (I was about to say of voluptuous, exquisite, submissive women. . .). The West denounces the veil and the harem with virtuous indignation. Behold how Mohammedan men mistreat their female consorts.

No doubt, they do. But when? Where? And who are these men? At close quarters, such accusations again only confound us. Before Mohammedanism, the Arabs never veiled the women. Today it is a common practice. In the country of my birth [Tunisia], Bedouin women rarely wore it . . . and then only to climb the social ladder. A dialectic on the veil is widely discussed, then forgotten. Now Oriental women, too, have hoisted the banner of

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revolt. How much longer will young Tunisian, Algerian, and Moroccan women submit to the law of the male? We shall see.

IS THERE NOTHING MORE to be said on the subject? Yes, indeed. The East is like a luminous specter: on the spot its differences are barely perceptible, but viewed from a distance, they loom much larger. What, then, is the East? It is a world of other people, far off somewhere.

"The Orient" is primarily the dream of "the Occident"—a dream of colors and odors unknown to the West, of exotic foods, of polygamy and *hammam*, which means a profusion of bodies, and nudity rediscovered. It represents travel and escape; the East has replaced the Italy of the Romantics. It is Flaubert's Carthage, Chateaubriand's journey from Paris to Jerusalem, now extended to the Tunisian oases and the souks of Marrakech. Travel is a dream life.

A dream of glory, too, no longer possible in Europe—like Lyautey's Morocco, like the Spahis garbed in red burnooses, scanning the horizon from a lofty perch astride their camels. A dream that sometimes turns into a nightmare in some small, ruined fortress where a Legionnaire, who has fired his last cartridge, lies dead on the scorched sand. In the not-so-distant past Barbary pirates—black demons with flashing white teeth—ravaged the coasts of Europe, violated women, and abducted children.

Nothing but a dream? Surely it is more than that. All the same, there are differences. Here again, let's be clear. As one who champions this claim, I can say in all fairness that the issue begins to irk as much as it bewilders us.

It was necessary to clarify this question because the men in power denounced it—hypocrites who aspired to proclaim the universality of their culture. False humanism reduced to a single model. To combat oppression or keep from drowning, self-assertion is a sound expedient. Self-assertion is something that differentiates us, like a flag. Oppression aside, it becomes folklore. Why not? But let us not exaggerate its importance; more to the point, let us not presume that our differences are better than anyone else's.

Cultural diversities do indeed exist—in literature, in religion, in language, the arts, and the law, in cuisine and culture, not excluding the siesta. But conflict is not inevitable because everything ceaselessly moves and changes institutions as well as culinary recipes. After the mass exodus of the colonizers, couscous became a national French dish. That's what my young son thought it always was. "Did it really come from that part of the world, papa?" he asked. It's like Enrico Macias, the singing idol of the crowds; like Dalida, who insinuated a rhythm of her native Egypt in her songs. As for democracy, the invention of the Greeks that became the political Bible of the West, what Oriental revolutionary is fighting for it?

We must, of course, respect the disparities, although perhaps not all of them. And rejoice that they exist. An unvaried world would be as depressing as a country of Eastern Europe; but we must take all that with affectionate irony. I maintain that the essential thing is to fight against injustice and the domination of some over others, whoever the some and the others may be. And accustom ourselves to see at a glance this planet for what it is becoming: one world.

Unpublished Notes

THE ARABS ARE NOMADS and their *true* civilization is that of the desert. But look here: Arab civilization reached its zenith in the cities. And let this clarify your thinking further: which is the better image of the Orient, the siesta in the shade of a whitewashed wall or tea in a bivouac?

The East is geographical space, of course, but again in terms of the Christian "Occident." Because among Arabs themselves, there is an "Occidental Orient"—the Maghreb—and a kind of "Orient of the Orient," the Fertile Crescent.

Anyway, what is a culture? In the literal sense, it is books, religious tradition, the search for the profane, language, the arts, and philosophy. But what is it in the larger sense? National cookery? How a man woos a girl or makes love? Let's just say it's all a style of life.

Translated from the French by WILLIAM A. PACKER □

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Sanford Pinsker

Philistine in Elbow Patches

AMBITION: THE SECRET PASSION, by Joseph Epstein.
New York: E. P. Dutton. 312 pp. $13.95.

At one point in *The Adventures of Augie March*, Saul Bellow's larky protagonist gets hooked up with an eccentric millionaire named Robey. Augie will, presumably, be his research assistant and, presumably, Robey will write a "survey or history of human happiness from the standpoint of the rich":

> He wanted to call it *The Needle's Eye* [Augie tells us] because there never had been a spiritual life for the rich if they didn't give up everything.

Robey's project is only one of the many lunatic schemes Augie bounces across and, needless to say, it is never completed.

Joseph Epstein's *Ambition* is, in many respects, the book that Robey could not write. It is at once an extended, neoconservative prayer to the twin gods of Ambition and Success, and a relentless attack on those who have given raspberries to the work ethic. It is also a book that makes it clear a staunch philistinism can co-exist with elbow patches, an academic job, and editorship of the *American Scholar*.

Who is to blame, Epstein asks again and again, for the fish-eye that some Americans give to success, for the contempt they feel toward the unabashedly ambitious? Epstein, an English professor, knows. For him, backbiting begins at home:

> Certainly no major American literary figure has failed to get in his word on the subject of success, and most have not spoken kindly of it. James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, William Dean Howells, Mark Twain, Robert Herrick, Frank Norris, Henry James—through the nineteenth century, from Cooper's distrust of the self-made man to James's deliciously sneering reference to his countrymen's "grope of wealth"—viewed success in America in terms ranging from equivocation to condemnation. In the twentieth century, the terms have been closer to those of unrelieved contempt. Antisuccess has been perhaps the strongest strain in American literature of the past half century. And to be against success is to put ambition in grave doubt.

One truth about American literature is that its canon is always being reshuffled—to emphasize our optimism (or pessimism), our obsession with whiteness (or blackness), our preoccupation with the Self (or society). American literature, like its favorite protagonists, contains multitudes. It has something to please everyone. That is, everyone except Joseph Epstein. He sees the best that American writers have thought and said as a tacit conspiracy against our national interest:

> It was not so much that these novelists preached failure but that they impugned success, and thus debunked ambition. They brought down the house but erected nothing in its place. . . .

The special pleading of the philistine has always been for "positive" novels, filled with *happy* people; the guardians of high culture have always responded with "Let them eat Blake!" What Epstein hankers for is hardly new, but he is one of the first to demand it from "our" side of the lectern:

> Perhaps the one novel that no serious writer in America would care to write today is one about a man who sets out to succeed in life and does so through work, decisive action, and discretion, without stepping on anyone's neck, without causing his family suffering, without himself becoming stupid or inhumane. . . . Yet it is a novel unlikely to get writ-

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ten so long as that other, more familiar novel—which has the ambitious man or woman confront society and either go under or win out only at the cost of his or her decency—provides, as it evidently does, so much comfort.

Thus was it ever. Novels seldom do a good job at special pleading. Moreover, Epstein has made it clear on other occasions that he has little patience with those who lobby for fictions that portray liberated women, suffering Jews, contented homosexuals, or militant blacks. Too much of the contemporary canon has become, in Epstein's analogue, an "Equal-Opportunity Employer," one arranged along liberal biases. On the other hand, he is quite prepared to champion boosters of the American Dream, even if what he describes is closer to fairy tale than to serious fiction.

Writers are not the only ones who disappoint Epstein. Academics take such delight in the naysaying they pass off as required reading that their students have little choice but to mouth back the language of cynicism or dummy up: "Excitement at the prospect of a career devoted to making money, even if it is felt, cannot be openly expressed." One wonders how long it has been since Epstein poked his nose into student life. I could, of course, point out that the hard evidence supplied by business and accounting departments does not support Epstein's assertion, but that would make for a very different book than the one *Ambition* actually is. But if we want to know why students are so shamefaced about the notion of "making money," Epstein has an answer:

> The reason is that it [ambition, success, making money, the Whole Works] has been systematically downgraded for a number of decades now, and these students, often the best among them, have learned their lessons well. What are these lessons? Business, to begin with, is hypocritical and sterile (see *Babbitt*). Ambition is unseemly and everywhere suspect (see *What Makes Sammy Run*, *The Great Gatsby*, and, for nonreaders, the movies *Citizen Kane* and *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*). Middle-class life is essentially boring (see modern literature); upper-middle-class life, worse (see, these students say, their own families). Affluence is a sham, a greedy affair bringing no happiness (see Galbraith et al.)

These students, so carefully attentive to what their teachers say, exist largely between the covers of Epstein's book. No matter. Epstein hectors his readers as if *The Greening of America* and *The Whole Earth Catalog* were still sacred texts, and the '60s remained alive and well. Which is to say, *Ambition* spends most of its time in rear-guard actions, doing battles with enemies who have long since departed the field.

LET'S TURN TO some of the promises included in the book's ambitious subtitle—*A Wide-Ranging Look at Changing Attitudes About Achievement in America*. Epstein begins his investigation by insisting that "Ambition is the fuel of achievement." The metaphor is, at best, unfortunate given OPEC, petrol-dollars, and the windfall profits heaped up by Exxon *et al.* Moreover, the sin is compounded when John D. Rockefeller turns up as one of the heart-warming case studies in "ambition." Other sketches include Henry Ford, the du Ponts, the Guggenheims and the Kennedys. "Achievement," as Epstein defines the term, clearly counts for more than history's judgment. He not only equates achievement with becoming rich and successful, but he singles out robber barons for special praise.

Not since the late 19th century has so much moral pabulum been heaped up on behalf of Self-Reliance. In Epstein's case, however, the pseudo-Emersonian language serves as a thin disguise for the exploitation and greed that lie underneath. He sees ambition and material success (read: wealth) as interchangeable terms, as if no worthier kinds of ambition exist. But even a cursory look at American culture suggests otherwise. The rich and successful do not exhaust the possibilities of what being "ambitious" can mean. Where, one wonders, would Willie Mays, or Dr. Jonas Salk, or Walter Reuther, or Ernest Hemingway, or Beverly Sills fit into Epstein's schema?

Epstein freely admits that "people will always argue about the ends to which ambition is put," but he goes on to insist that this is neither the real point nor the real question. Rather,

> . . . the real question posed by ambition is whether or not each of us has a true hand in shaping his own destiny. People who believe that our control over our own destinies is slight, if not nonexistent, will not think very well of ambition: it may even seem rather comical to them. For such people forces, not individual will, are what count; history, not biography, is decisive. . . .
>
> [Nonetheless] we do choose how we shall live: courageously or in cowardice, honorably or dishonorably, with purpose or in drift. We decide what is important and what is trivial in life. We decide that what makes us significant is either what we do or what we refuse to do. . . . We decide. We choose. And as we decide and choose, so are our lives formed. In the end, forming our own destiny is what ambition is about.

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This, I would submit, is plain foolishness. And a dangerous foolishness to boot. The issue is not how we choose to live—as if this were an isolated event devoid of social consequences—but, rather, what *kind* of world we want to live in. Epstein ignores, and probably distrusts, any impulses that generate from a source other than the pocketbook. He turns "ambition" into a synonym for selfishness.

Ambition is a clarion call to ahistoricity, "the Imperial Self," and the virtues of keeping one's eye on the main chance. It is a book that David Stockman can read between a day of cutting social programs for those who have less of a hand in forming their destinies than Epstein likes to imagine and a night of undisturbed sleep. It is also a book that preaches to the newly converted on the New Right and takes delight in kicking wounded liberals now that they're down.

Ambition is a study that substitutes a convenient fantasy for the facts of the matter and glibness for hard thought. It is not likely to tell most of us how to live at the ragged end of our century, much less how to live well. More important, it sidesteps the question of what we get when our individual "ambitions" are toted up. *That* subject is far more complicated than anything Epstein provides in his pinchfaced book. □

Robert Lekachman

Right Wisdom

WEALTH AND POVERTY, by George Gilder. New York: Basic Books. 306 pp. $16.95.

I know George Gilder as a likable chap, prey to surges of emotion that last long enough to translate themselves into entire books. In the wake of the 1964 Goldwater debacle, Gilder, then in his Ripon Society phase, wrote with Bruce Chapman *The Party that Lost its Head*, advancing an argument that Republicans for the sake of self-preservation should accept the welfare state and administer it with more efficiency but just as much compassion as chuckle-headed Democrats.

By 1978, Gilder had seen a different light. *Visible Man*, his revelation of that year, insisted that welfare was destroying the morale of black men. Young males, the story went, prefer grabbing the welfare checks from the women they prey upon to getting out and hustling at an honest job. Of course, male exploitation of women and associated patterns of violence, drunkenness, and crime also occur in such enlightened places as South Africa whose leaders are innocent of lavish welfare spending upon blacks. For that matter, the same disheartening phenomena can be observed in our own South where welfare benefits remain properly meager. Like any other enthusiast, Gilder is undeterred by niggling criticisms of this variety. Only reform welfare, and black men will go to work, bring back sustenance to their mates, and rejoin the proud company of nuclear family men.

Since *Visible Man*, Gilder has done a quantity of heavy reading of selected anthropologists, sociobiologists, conservative economists, and psychologists who recognize the importance of inherited intelligence. *Work and Wealth* is glowingly praised by Nathan Glazer (alas, for the Nat I once knew!), Jack Kemp, and David Stockman. The last named cannot help admitting that "*Wealth and Poverty* is Promethean in its intellectual power and insight." Gilder returns the favor in the text of his manifesto. Its pages constitute a veritable anthology of the truths of the Reagan era and, for good measure, a novel doctrine of its author's invention.

Gilder is, to begin with, a male supremacist without reservation. Women should stay home and nurture their husbands and children. When they venture into the world of work, they contradict nature's intent, threaten the stability of marriage, and damage the emotional health of their progeny. Into the bargain, they erode the work ethic because "Two half-hearted participants in the labor force can do better than one who is competing aggressively for the relatively few jobs in the upper echelons." Males are programmed to hunt, dominate, and fight. Gilder informs us that any successful society encourages these genetic predispositions.

Gilder takes a glum view of male nature. Given half a chance, polygamous men will enjoy sexual diversity without accepting family responsibility. Any community that separates sexual pleasure from the obligation to pay for its biological consequences will surely endure the very social patholo-

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gies of the United States in the 1980s. Consensual divorce, informal sexual arrangements, working women, and publicly subsidized idleness assault the roots of the bourgeois ethic. On such topics as these, Gilder, though a Harvard graduate and a member in good standing of the Century Association, does come on amazingly like the Reverend Jerry Farwell. Happily his prose style reflects Harvard rather than the effusions of the Moral Majority.

AS AN UNQUALIFIED ADMIRER of free enterprise, Gilder rejects with proper vigor progressive taxes, environmental and other regulation, and similar impediments to competition, red in tooth and claw. Free to roam in the jungles of commerce, entrepreneurs in the 19th century made capitalism great. They may yet do so again if the blundering interference of government ceases. At this juncture, Gilder makes his own original addition to the standard case for capitalism. From Adam Smith to Irving Kristol, apologists for capitalism have emphasized self-interest as motive force for innovation and growth. Rather regretfully, that chivalrous Victorian Alfred Marshall advised his readers that it was safer to rely upon the strongest of human motives than the highest—avarice not altruism.

For Gilder, this utilitarian justification will not do. He yearns to demonstrate that capitalism is not only more efficient than socialism but also morally and ethically superior. His claim is a trifle startling, nothing less than identification of capitalists as practical altruists. Investors risk their money with no certainty that they will regain it, much less earn a profit. Isn't this altruism? "Capitalism," exclaims its celebrant, "begins with giving." In the dawn of anthropological time, the potlach won glory and power for the chiefs whose banquets were most lavish. Of course, their guests incurred obligations to reciprocate in kind, but no chief could be certain of return.

It does all tend to transform one's judgment of ITT altruistically conniving at the overthrow of the Allende regime, Nestle marketing infant formula to be mixed with polluted water in the poor societies of the Third World, Hooker Chemicals thoughtfully strewing poisonous chemicals around the landscape, food conglomerates solicitously training tiny TV viewers in the merits of junk foods, and of so many, many other bustling altruists.

Still, fair is fair. Gilder is fun to read. The man writes well and, usually at his kookiest, rises to eloquence. And the attention paid to the book and its perpetrator attests to the times in which we live. In one feast of pop social science, Gilder has served up the favorite nostrums of neoconservatives, Moral Majoritarians, male chauvinist pigs, supply siders, monetarists, and nostalgic admirers of family life on the frontier.

At $16.95, I don't say that *Wealth and Poverty* is cheap, but over the next four years it may well justify purchase at a Barnes & Noble discount as a reference work for explication of wild events in Washington and the provinces. □

Lewis Coser

Religion and Revolution

FIRE IN THE MINDS OF MEN: ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY FAITH, by James H. Billington. New York: Basic Books. 677 pp. $25.00.

Billington's previous book, his masterful cultural history of Russia, *The Icon and the Axe*, was acclaimed as a major departure in the interpretation of Russian culture. His present work, which aims to trace the origins of modern revolutionary faith and seeks to write the story "not of revolutions but of revolutionaries," has so far received a highly critical reception, mainly on the part of Marxist commentators. I shall try to show that their criticism is mostly based on a misunderstanding of the author's intentions. Although this book is not in the same class as Billington's earlier work, it still has considerable merit, along with major flaws.

In the first part, the most original, Billington shows in instructive detail that mystic doctrines, sectarian secret societies, occult traditions, and Masonic cliques exerted a considerable influence on the men who were to become main actors in the drama of the French Revolution. For example,

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the Bavarian secret order of the *Illuminati*, created by one Adam Weishaupt in 1776 and suppressed by the Bavarian police nine years later, is shown to have influenced the ideas not only of moderate leaders at the earlier stages of the Revolution, such as Mirabeau, but of revolutionary journalists in the later radical phases, such as Nicholas Bonneville. Filippo Buonarotti, the author of the *History of the Babeuf Conspiracy*, which became a sort of Bible for the various conspiratorial societies that emerged in postrevolutionary France, in Italy, and elsewhere in the first part of the 19th century, seems to have been a link between the older mystical and the later radical tradition.

Marxist commentators have reacted to Billington's portrayal of early revolutionaries as men and women often deeply influenced by occult movements, mystagogues, eccentrics and madmen, much as families tend to react in defense of the purity of the family tree. They attempt to erase from collective memory disreputable ancestors. Yet it is only to be expected that men and women embarked on an uncharted course that is to result in a new social and political order are attracted by intellectual currents that, in their fundamental dissent from prevailing orthodoxies, seem to provide guideposts and markers.

There is, to be sure, an unfortunate sentence on the first page of Billington's book that provides a handle for his critics. "The revolutionary faith," he writes, "was shaped not so much by the critical rationalism of the French Enlightenment (as is generally believed) as by the occultism and protoromanticism of Germany." This has led commentators such as Peter Singer (*New York Review of Books*, 11/6/80) to argue that Marx and Engels, Proudhon and Lassalle owed nothing to occult sectarians and were true sons of the Enlightenment. But nowhere does Billington say anything to the contrary. He talks about the Illuminati, the Philadelphian fantasies, the passions for the idea of the Pythagoreans and other occult ideas and organizations only in the first part of the work, which deals with the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He then leaves this whole theme when he depicts the national and social revolutionary trends of the mid-19th century and after. The first part of the book abounds in novel insights, and brings to light previously neglected facets of the revolutionary experience. This part provides a fascinating journey into the hitherto largely neglected underworld of journalists, actors, marginal intellectuals, and failed professionals who furnished much of the leadership of the French revolutionary movement.

Billington's vivid description of the Palais Royal, the oasis of free thought, which is transformed by its owner, the reform-minded Philip of Orleans, into a vast complex of cafés, exhibition halls, entertainment centers, and bordellos is alone worth the price of admission. The Palais Royal, from which, incidentally, the call for the storming of the Bastille emanated, was not only the nursery of revolutionary thought, the preferred marketplace for unconventional ideas, the favorite haunt of radical thinkers, but also a gathering ground for sly pornographers and seekers of unconventional sexual experiences. Here revolutionary journalists rubbed shoulders with mystical sectarians, humanitarian ideologues, occult would-be saviors of humanity, as well as a variegated underworld of confidence men. To be sure, puritanical Jacobins shunned such disreputable quarters, but the revolutionary pamphleteers, writers, and editors, who did so much to fuel the revolutionary passions that the Jacobins first tried to channel and later to suppress, largely emanated from the Palais Royal.

The first part of the book, devoted to the French Revolution and its preparatory phases, abounds in fascinating descriptions of the new world of popular journalism, of revolutionary songs and opera, of popular festivities, and of outbursts of suddenly liberated psychic energies. The author also provides splendid vignettes of largely forgotten revolutionary actors. The later parts, which bring the story up to the Russian Revolution, are considerably less original. Here Billington traces the bifurcation of the original twin idea of *Egalité* and *Fraternité* into national revolutionary movements seeking to bring about fraternal brotherhood in newly liberated nations and social revolutionary movements concerned with reaching an egalitarian socialist or communist society. The conspiratorial societies that fed both movements, from the Italian carbonari and Mazzini's Young Italy and Young Europe to the various clandestine movements against Napoleon, the restored Bourbon regime, and the reign of Louis Philippe are dealt with in considerable detail, but there seems little here that has not been adequately depicted elsewhere.

The chapters Billington devotes to the Saint-Simonians and to other pre-Marxist socialist movements are adequate but again not terribly new. The same holds true for chapters devoted to Marx, Bakunin, Proudhon, and German Social Democracy. The last few chapters, devoted to Russian developments and dealing with an area in which the author has long shown his mastery, provide a much richer texture than the chapters

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that precede them. But even here, when it comes, for example, to the story of Russian populism, Billington doesn't provide much that cannot be found in Venturi's great history of that subject. Moreover, his sketchy treatment of Lenin hardly departs from standard works.

The last chapter, however, on the role of women in revolutionary movements, is a splendidly evocative study of a largely neglected subject. I suppose that few readers, unless they are feminist scholars, have been aware that a sudden surge of feminine revolutionary activity and organization in the early years of the French Revolution was brutally suppressed during the national mobilization in 1793. The revolutionary Convention, with only one dissenting voice, voted to outlaw all women's associations. Yet women again played active roles in the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and especially in the Commune of 1871. The Russian populist and Social Revolutionary movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries attracted many gifted revolutionary women. Yet they never achieved even a modicum of equality with men who fought for these revolutions under the banner of equality—for men only. The last pages of the book provide a moving portrait of Rosa Luxemburg, and this alone would seem to testify that Billington by no means intended to write an antirevolutionary tract, as some of his critics seem to believe.

YET THERE IS SOMETHING PUZZLING about Billington's approach, and that is his persistent attempt to explain revolutionary developments in religious terms. The title of chapters and subchapters refer to "Faith," to "Prophecy," "The Early Church," to "Credo," and "Ecclesia." I see no objection to tracing certain elements of revolutionary thought to secularized religious themes or to submerged religious traditions or styles of thought. Nothing starts *ab ovo*, and new trends always borrow from past ideas. Just as Carl Becker showed a good while ago in *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* that rational Enlightenment thought was still much indebted to religious ideas and imagery from the Age of Faith, so it stands to reason that revolutionaries, even violently antireligious revolutionaries, still owed a good deal, mostly unwittingly, to previous religious traditions. Messianic and eschatological elements can surely be found in the history of revolutionary ideas. Visions of the Second Coming played their part in the imagery of the future blissful solution to all the problems of contemporary society. Only doctrinaire fools would deny such influences. But Billington pursues this theme with a relentlessness and persistence that seems to me not only misplaced but misleading.

Two examples: He claims that Engels asserted in one of his last writings that the German Social Democrats were "destined to become the new state religion of the very empire that had persecuted them." When one reads the text, however, of Engels's introduction to a new edition of Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*, it turns out that all he did was to compare the early stages of Christianity and its slow infiltration into the nooks and corners of Roman society with the slow peaceful penetration into German society by Social Democratic members and ideas. There is nothing here that suggests the idea of a new Marxist state religion.

Or take Billington's characterization of Lenin's theory of imperialism. "Like the nine-headed beast in the Book of Revelation, the ravening beasts of finance capitalism were for Lenin a sign that the end of history was near." One need not have great admiration for Lenin's book to recognize that it is carefully researched and reasoned even though largely based on prior work by others. It has as much in common with the Book of Revelation as Keynes's *General Theory* has with the parable of the loaves and fishes. Billington's claim that religious thought is a dominant theme in revolutionary ideology cannot be sustained on the basis of his own data. The Scotch verdict "not proven" seems the only appropriate one.

There are still other places where Billington's deep-seated suspicions about much, though not all, revolutionary thought seem to lead him to uncautious formulations. When he says that "Lenin's key associates in St. Petersburg were almost all middle-class intellectuals drawn to revolutionary activity not so much out of deep conviction as out of the inertial habit of the St. Petersburg student subculture," one must ask why a student subculture could not sustain deep convictions, and second whether men like Yury Martov lacked such convictions. In a similar way, when Billington says earlier that Lassalle's mass oratory and fascination with Bismarck "prefigured in a way the later German fascination with the radio voice and aggressive masculinity of National Socialism," one is led to ask whether aggressive mass oratory was limited to Germany in the 19th century and after.

I could provide further examples of such flaws in Billington's work. But I prefer to close on a more positive note. This book, especially its first part, will be indispensable for all those who wish to probe the revolutionary experience and revolutionary personalities at some depth. □

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Michael Zakim

Soviet Rhapsody

TESTIMONY: THE MEMOIRS OF DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH, by Dmitri Shostakovich, as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov. New York: Harper & Row. 289 pp. $15.00.

Even as youngsters playing his music, we were aware that Shostakovich had led a life dominated by the vicissitudes of Soviet politics, that his art was frequently manipulated for the party's anti-artistic purposes. It seemed to us that his works, which invoked the passion and melancholia of the proverbial Russian soul, also betrayed a sense of personal tragedy. His most evocative music—for instance, the slow, dirgelike movements in the Sixth, Eighth, and Thirteenth (Babi Yar) symphonies—reflected not only the traditional inner tensions of an artist but Shostakovich's own silent, bitter struggle with the state. Now, with the publication of his posthumous memoir, *Testimony*, his life and music emerge with a pathos greater and more complex than we could have imagined.

This is an oral history, most of it written down in 1972 during conversations between Dmitri Shostakovich and Solomon Volkov, a young Jewish Soviet musicologist. Each section of the manuscript was initialed by the authors and smuggled to the West—soon followed, a year after Shostakovich's death in 1975, by Volkov himself. The book was published here in 1979 amid much excitement, and promptly denounced by the Soviets as a forgery. Though there has been some controversy in America, too, the book is certainly genuine. Shostakovich was not to let the commissars rob him of his final testament. He had the prescience to give Volkov sufficient proof of authenticity and, more important, to arm his friend with the most potent weapon: historical truth.

Shostakovich has produced a historical document, salvaging memories that no longer officially exist in the U.S.S.R. This is an array of opinions, stories, anecdotes, descriptions, speculations—bits of memories and feelings that bring Shostakovich's personality and life into focus. Sometimes his voice is sad and faraway, speaking with detachment of the turmoil of earlier years, almost nostalgic for a comfort he never really had. But then again an urgency comes rushing back, and he is anxious to continue. Always, he seems trapped by despair. Slowly, this extemporaneous monologue on the issues and personalities of his day becomes an intimate self-portrait, a uniquely personal glimpse of Soviet history.

SHOSTAKOVICH CAME OF AGE soon after the October Revolution, a period of relative liberalism in Soviet art. The time seemed full of promise, and there was a rush of excitement and activity in the Russian art world. Developments in the visual arts alone in Moscow in 1920 give us some idea of this energy.

Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner, Alexander Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, and others developed their styles and ideas—and constructivism was on the rise.

This new, "left" art, sparked by the communist interest in mass politics and the industrial machine, affected all the arts. The filmmaker Eisenstein, the dramatist Meyerhold, and the poet Mayakovsky embraced this new genre of "constructivism," proclaiming "the streets our museum, the walls our canvasses."

Nor were musicians immune to this spirit. Prokofiev and Stravinsky returned periodically from the West. Shostakovich speaks of the influence of Hindemith, Krenek, Milhaud, and of Berg, who was to come to Leningrad and conduct his opera *Wozzeck*.

In this milieu Shostakovich began his career, off to an auspicious start with the warm critical reception of his First Symphony, a conservatory senior thesis, written at the age of nineteen. No doubt, he had the makings of a successful "socialist artist." His family had a *narodnik* background and had supported the Bolsheviks during the Civil War; as an eleven-year-old Shostakovich had watched Lenin's arrival at the Finland Station.

Shostakovich now entered the artistic circles of Leningrad. He moved easily in this world, conscious of his tremendous musical promise. He soon became associated with the most eminent figures of his day; artists who would deeply influence him and would, after their destruction in the purges, leave Shostakovich as one of the few living links to that obliterated cultural epoch.

Most important for the aspiring young composer was his association with Meyerhold. One day in 1928 the famed actor and director had phoned him to offer a musical position with his renowned Leningrad theater. Shostakovich immediately accepted. Their relationship soon became close, with Meyerhold providing Shostakovich with a home, a stimulating association with

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his preeminent theater, and friendship. Meyerhold insisted upon and inspired a seriousness about art that helped the young composer overcome lingering self-doubts. That year probably marked Shostakovich's emotional coming of age; it also left him an uncertain legatee of Meyerhold's independent style.

The two had ambitious plans for future collaboration. In the end, though, Shostakovich couldn't get along with Meyerhold's domineering wife, the actress Zinaida Nikolayevna Raikh, whom he blames for their tragic fate. "It was she who made him stay close to the rulers," Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Bukharin. Needless to say, such connections earned Meyerhold the enmity of Stalin.

> [Prokofiev's opera] *Semyon Kotko* was put into production at the Stanislavsky Opera Theater by Meyerhold. It was his last work in the theater. The director was arrested but the work went on as though nothing had happened. This was one of the terrible signs of the age, a man disappeared but everyone pretended nothing had happened. The name Meyerhold immediately disappeared from conversations. That was all.

SHOSTAKOVICH'S RELATIONSHIP with the great poet Mayakovsky was marred by antipathy. As an adolescent, he had much admired Mayakovsky's writings, never missing a reading in Leningrad. He had even tried to set some of the poems to music.

But when they met at the Meyerhold theater in 1929 during rehearsals for Mayakovsky's play *The Bedbug*, there was bad blood. Mayakovsky appeared at the theater dressed in yellow, with a flower painted on his cheek. As always Shostakovich was incredulous and repelled in the face of such individualistic expression. ("That kind of foolishness in the new political climate could have done him only harm.") And although the two now were collaborators—Shostakovich was writing the musical score for *The Bedbug*—matters didn't improve between them. Shostakovich considered Mayakovsky unscrupulous, an undauntable egoist with a love of self-advertisement, and a hypocrite who celebrated the revolution in his writings while retaining so many bourgeois habits.

It was the poet's relationship to Stalin and the party leadership in the '30s that especially upset Shostakovich. He saw Mayakovsky drawn to the heady position of a companion to the powerful, and serving them as a mouthpiece for the specious directives aimed at the intelligentsia that marked the advent of socialist realism in the arts. With the complicity of such genuinely gifted but flawed individuals as Mayakovsky, art in the Soviet Union now was to be confined to the realm of propaganda, entirely subordinate to the political sensibilities of one man. Anyone implicated in this development, anyone associated even by their acquiescence to the authorities' bloody intimidations was seen by Shostakovich as guilty of collaboration.

In this connection Shostakovich raises, indirectly—quite apart from the question of real guilt and innocence—a fascinating and less discussed aspect of Stalinism: the psychology of the survivors, the guilt and anger that plagued those who outlived the terror. Could one, particularly a celebrity, survive without collaborating? What judgment could Shostakovich then pass on his fellow survivors that wouldn't include himself? This dilemma is omnipresent in Shostakovich's words; it seems to have dominated his later life.

That Shostakovich survived Stalin can be attributed to a willingness to sacrifice his integrity. That he survived as a whole, and very private, person, so acutely separate from his public self, is not so certain. He was always careful not to provoke the authorities, and when he fell into disfavor he did all he could to regain official approval. Meanwhile, he seethed with frustration at such repeated humiliations. These requirements for survival so color his recollections that *Testimony* becomes an intimate study of Stalin's psychological legacy.

Shostakovich saw Meyerhold disappear overnight, and remembered how they came and murdered his wife in her home. Shostakovich's supporter Marshall Tukhachevsky, the military hero—feared and envied by Stalin—was arrested and shot for being an alleged Nazi spy. Shostakovich's musical mentor Nikolai Zhilayev soon followed. His friend the Jewish actor Solomon Mikhoels the same. And so many others. As Shostakovich says, "you know how things turned out." He speaks with bitterness but also with irony—self-protection, really. He had to distance himself from the terror, in order to survive. Unlike his friends who perished, he compromised successfully time and time again. Their death and martyrdom brought them a saintly status that Shostakovich respected but was too frightened to ever tempt.

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He blamed Meyerhold for playing politics, Eisenstein for buckling under the political currents, Prokofiev for seeking fame and appeasing the authorities, and Mayakovsky for praising Stalin—who decided who would live and who would die.

HOW DIFFERENT WAS SHOSTAKOVICH? The already reticent young man was pushed further inward by the fear and isolation of the times. In reaction to the heightening nightmare, he retreated into the role of a *yurodivy*—a Russian life of outer apathy but inner turmoil and alienation, exemplified for Shostakovich by the 19th-century nationalist composer Moussorgsky. Shostakovich had to project a harmless, impotent image to the world while retaining a keen sense of observation, even a mystical clairvoyance, with some cryptic means for expressing his ideas. Appropriately, such expression was contained in the imagery of his music.

His Fifth Symphony was written in 1937 while Shostakovich was in extreme disfavor. It is the product of a *yurodivy*. A *Pravda* editorial the previous year, purportedly written by Stalin himself, had denounced Shostakovich's successful opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* as antisocialist and "formalistic" (noisy "muddle instead of music"). This was soon followed by an attack on his ballet *Bright Stream*. These notices signaled a purge in contemporary Russian music of the intellectual and antimelodious tendencies popular in the serial and dissonant music of the West. However, the premiere of the Fifth was an official triumph, received as a celebration of Soviet greatness and conforming to Soviet aesthetic tenets. Shostakovich was now no longer branded an "antipeople" composer.

For Shostakovich himself, the work stands as a tragedy. The "exultant" last movement was for him—and, he insists, for the audience on the night of the premiere—a threnody for the rape of Russian life.

> The rejoicing is forced, created under threat. . . . It's as if someone were beating you with a stick and saying, "Your business is rejoicing, your business is rejoicing," and you rise, shaky, and go marching off, muttering, "Our business is rejoicing, our business is rejoicing."

Shostakovich's justifications are still not easy to understand. His dissociation from everything political, his works written at the behest of the authorities and used for propagandistic purposes, and his emergence in the West and at home as a Soviet hero all seem to put him in league with those he condemns. At best, I fear, he was left without a reference point, confused by the manic fluctuations of Soviet reality and by the tensions of his own schizophrenic condition. Just as the discrepancy between what one sees and what one's body feels causes nausea, so Shostakovich's heart said one thing, the exigencies of survival another:

> Then Stalin called. And in his nagging way, the leader and teacher asked me why I didn't want to go to America. I answered that I couldn't. My comrades' music wasn't played, and neither was mine. They would ask in America. What could I say? . . .
>
> "We'll take care of that problem, Comrade Shostakovich. What about your health?"
>
> And I told Stalin the pure truth: "I'm nauseated."
>
> Stalin was taken aback and then started mulling over this unexpected bulletin. "Why are you nauseated? From what? We'll send you a physician, he'll see why you are nauseated." And so on.
>
> So finally I agreed, I made the trip to America [to the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace in New York, 1949]. It cost me a great deal, that trip, I had to answer stupid questions and keep from saying too much. They made a sensation out of that too. And all I thought about was: how much longer do I have to live?

And so, Shostakovich's *yurodivy* existence begins to make sense to us. Although it provided a rationale for self-preservation, it also signaled the composer's recognition of a world that denied rationality and thus forced his flight from it.

FOLK MUSIC had presented a problem to the Kremlin in the '30s. It was as independent of the official line as the despised avant garde in the West but harder, much harder, to control. Folk music was deeply rooted in cultural traditions and couldn't be banned as could a composer or even a formal style; there were no books to burn, no texts to censor. This oral art was an organic link to past centuries, integral to native culture. In the Ukraine, for as long as anyone could remember, this Old World tradition was carried on by blind minstrels who traveled through the countryside.

Stalin called an all-Ukrainian Congress of *Lirniki* and *Banduristy*. Hundreds of the blind folk singers gathered, answering Stalin's call "to build a better future." Shostakovich recalls, "It was a living museum, the country's living history. All its songs, its music and poetry." They were all shot.

Not long afterward, it was decided that national sentiments could be useful, like the national celebrations of Stalin's Georgian origins. But with the eradication of folk music there was no material left for the huge song and dance festivals staged throughout the country. Then an answer was found: obscure but well-trained composers, exiled

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found: obscure but well-trained composers, exiled or seeking anonymity in the outer provinces, were put back to work with the task of recreating the "national music" of Tashkent, Ashkhabad, Alma-Ata, and so forth. Of course, the works they wrote appeared on the programs with local names and not their own; but no complaints were heard. At least one could compose again and one's works were performed. Few knew what was going on and they kept their mouths shut:

> Sometimes I chastize myself for keeping quiet rather than talking, and not only talking but even publishing articles on these trumped-up musical festivals. But what can I do? Can I change anything? Earlier this was a tragedy, that's true. But now it's more of a comedy. . . . I can't do anything anyway.

Shostakovich was not a great composer—certainly not on a par with Stravinsky or the serialists. His music lacks variety and originality. There are exceptions, including the opera *Lady Macbeth*. It has often been said that Shostakovich never realized the genius his First Symphony promised. Perhaps this memoir tells us why.

When he died, Shostakovich was eulogized by the international press as a hero of Soviet art. We know now that he wasn't. He was, rather, another symbol of the revolution gone awry. His *Testimony* is his response to the guilt and survival of that nightmare. That he had enough hope left to want to produce this testament is a victory of the human spirit in an otherwise victoryless story.

PS: Since this review was written, Shostakovich's son, Maxim, the eminent Soviet conductor, and his son, a pianist, have defected to the West. □

Murray Hansknecht

A Contrast of Two Societies

SOVIET AND AMERICAN SOCIETY: A COMPARISON, by Paul Hollander. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (Phoenix Edition). 476 pp. $7.95.

Originally published by one university press in 1973, Paul Hollander's work is now reissued in paperback by another. The publishing business being what it is a revised text is impossible, but this new edition does carry a new Introduction in which the author makes a "reassessment" of his original work. Not surprisingly, he finds himself satisfied, though not complacent, with the way it has held up, and I think there are good grounds for his satisfaction.

As his subtitle indicates, Hollander contrasts two societies commonly conceived of as being antithetical social structures, although at the time he was writing, the idea that there was a "convergence" of the two was a popular notion. An attempt at "comparison" is not in itself unusual; any work on Soviet institutions or social processes implicitly, if not explicitly, contrasts them with Western societies. But typically the focus is on one institutional area, or there is an assumption of some special interest and expertise on the part of the reader. In those accounts, explicit comparisons are made primarily to point up the functioning of the Soviet system. Hollander had something more ambitious in mind.

First, he ranges across the entire institutional structure so that, for example, there are comparisons of the political system, stratification and styles of life, sex roles and family life, and a survey of what American textbooks call "social problems" in both societies. Although the book is not organized on an "equal time" principle there is a dual focus, and it can also profitably be read as an analysis of American society in the latter half of the century. But because it is written for the non-specialist in Soviet affairs, the general reader will profit most from the broad (but not superficial) view of Soviet society.

THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCES between the United States and the Soviet Union lead to differences in the way each can be described. An American sociologist can describe not only the "official" values of, say, American schools or the formal structure of the congressional committee system but also collect information on the *actual* values that determine the functioning of school systems and directly observe the functioning of the committee system. The analyst of Soviet society, on the other hand, knows relatively little about the day-to-day operation of Soviet institutions and the attitudes and practices of ordinary citizens. Pictures of the institutional realities of Soviet life have to be pieced together as best one can. Hollander does rather well on this score, but inevitably in many areas the description of American society has a richer texture.

The necessity of constructing a picture of a society from bits and pieces, from hints and indirect clues that, at the extreme, can transform a

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serious scholar into a Kremlinologist makes the central problem of any comparative study even more critical in this instance: How, in the jargon of the trade, are the societies to be "conceptualized"? The meaning or significance of any bit of data will depend upon the assumptions made about the nature of the societies. Hollander opts for a characterization of "imperfect pluralism" and "imperfect totalitarianism." The latter allows for the awareness that "totalitarianism" is a concept that took its meanings and connotations from the Stalin era and that its unqualified application today can be misleading. In the same way "imperfect pluralism" is a reminder that American society falls far short of any ideal of pluralism.

But even a qualified use of "totalitarianism" to define the basic nature of the society is questioned today. There are Soviet experts who contend that any such characterization assumes that the society is more unchanging than is actually the case and overlooks the emergence of a more pragmatic, less ideologically rigid orientation among the present leadership. Hollander does not deny the significance of the changes since the death of Stalin. Nonetheless, he and many others "continue to believe that the qualified application of the established model remains useful." He maintains that it is best to assume that "totalitarianism should be viewed as in *intention* of the Soviet leaders," and he cites with approval another expert who contends that these leaders have "'a peculiar ideological drive for remaking human nature.'" Hollander is distinctly opposed to any notion that the long-term drift of both societies is toward convergence.

As might be expected, these views are not based on purely theoretical considerations; they are influenced by an unusual personal history. Hollander was twenty-four years old when he left Hungary in 1956 to study at the London School of Economics. In Hungary after completing secondary school he worked mainly in manual jobs after serving a stint in the military. Since arriving here in 1959 he has been "a graduate student, Ph.D. recipient, and university professor." The Hungarian experience, which included living through the abortive revolution, accounts for the stress on totalitarianism. It also lends his work a dimension that can only come from a first-hand knowledge of a Soviet-type society. But the specifics of the American experience are also evident and pertinent. He was writing the book at a time when American campuses were in disorder and when fundamental assumptions about higher education, to say nothing of other social institutions, were being questioned. Hollander does not hide his distaste for the student radicals and the New Left in general; indeed, even those who share his views of the New Left may find their expression striking a somewhat sour note when read in the '80s.

On the other hand, much of the value of the book derives from the fact that the social institutions and processes that are the scholarly concern of *Soviet and American Society* were also the focus of intense political action in the society. When it was first published, the book was politically "relevant." But since many of the issues raised by the New Left then are still politically salient today, Hollander's work remains a useful analysis for the politically engaged as well as for those seeking an informed and sophisticated analysis of the two societies. □

Douglas Stone

The Struggle of Soviet Dissidents

SOVIET DISSIDENTS: THEIR STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, by Joshua Rubenstein. Boston: Beacon Press. 304 pp. $12.95.

This book, the most comprehensive look so far at dissidence in the Soviet Union, is a well-written summary account of the Moscow human rights movement, from the era of the post-Stalinist reforms through Andrei Sakharov's internal exile in 1980 to the industrial city of Gorki. Joshua Rubenstein makes excellent use of most of the primary and secondary accounts of this topic. He supplements here the many first-hand anguished accounts by numerous dissidents now available in English.

The reader looking for a good introduction to the Soviet human rights movement will glean a number of their primary causes—artistic freedom, due process in Soviet courtrooms, the activity of Lithuanian Catholics, Ukrainian nationalists, and Crimean Tatars, the right of Jews to emigrate, and the struggle against (and struggle to publicize) the psychiatric incarceration of political prisoners.

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Rubenstein makes it clear that dissent is a natural reaction to conditions in the Soviet Union and not, as Soviet officials claim, the result of Western propaganda or merely the work of mental misfits out to cause embarrassment to the regime.

The author examines the complex relationship between democratic and Zionist activities. He points out that the Zionist emigration movement would not be such an astonishing success without the aid of many important non-Jews such as Valery Chalidze and Andrei Sakharov. By the mid 1970s both groups realized the importance and benefit of working together against a relentless common antagonist. Rubenstein's detailed analysis of the Zionist movement and its links with the democratic dissidents is the most complete yet recorded.

Historians cannot resist the temptation to compare periods of Russian history and neither does Mr. Rubenstein. Today within the Soviet Union intellectual and spiritual life is even more restricted than it was under the Czarist autocracy. And Soviet rulers are quicker to penetrate, and more determined to prevent, any contact between political dissidents and workers. The external environment of Brezhnev's Russia is also very different from that of the Russia of Nicholas. In 1850 all Europe feared Russia's military power, but the Crimean War proved this to be a fallacy. In 1980, however, the Soviet Union is a nuclear superpower with weaponry to intimidate Europe and the world—and so there are striking points of difference between the Russia of Nicholas and the Russia of Brezhnev. The three most prominent, sophisticated, and eloquent exponents of the main currents of detente are Andrei Sakharov, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, and Roy Medvedev. More than any other current dissident, Andrei Sakharov has represented the philosophy of Western liberal democratization. Since 1970 he publicly called for Soviet respect of the law, for representative government and freedom for individual self-expression. He views detente as the basic vehicle to move the Soviet Union away from its isolation and to speed internal democratization.

Unlike Sakharov, Alexander Solzhenitsyn is wary of Western-style democracy, consumer "materialism," and detente with the Soviet Union. He is more concerned with freedom of the soul than freedom from one's callous government. For him detente is equated with Western "complaisance" and "concession." Solzhenitsyn, like the Slavophiles, believes in a unique, almost Dostoevskian spiritual development of Russia under a fatherly benevolent Czar who will lead the messianic salvation of the world.

Roy Medvedev, however, represents another current in contemporary Soviet dissident thinking. He is a Marxist dissident inside the Soviet Union who criticizes the remnants of Stalinist Russia from a leftist perspective. He takes a more qualified stand and perhaps gives a more realistic appraisal than Sakharov of the influence detente can exert on internal Soviet affairs. Medvedev believes that only the Soviet government can initiate democratic internal reforms, but that Western technological equipment will inevitably assist in the liberalization of the Soviet regime.

Rubenstein presents the extremely wide range of opinion among various Russians who are conveniently lumped together under the current descriptive term "dissidents." This term includes admirers and opponents of Western-style democracy, religious believers and atheists, Leninists and social democrats, Zionists, Russian nationalists, and spokesmen for the rights of the non-Russian nations. The views of all these diverse factions are carefully scrutinized by Rubenstein.

Yet while these various dissidents will acknowledge that they do not have a common futuristic vision or a common ideology, they all struggle to assert their rights and all are the opponents of fear. This has led to the public exposure of the house that Lenin built and Stalin refortified for what it is—a society that regularly practices systematic intimidation and arbitrary rule. As Pyotr Yakir explains the basic aim of the umbrella dissident movement:

> [We] tried to make public every illegal act committed in our country so that all the world may know. Under Stalin there was always an iron curtain and no one knew what was going on here. Millions of people were destroyed and nobody knew anything about it. Now we try to publicize every arrest, every dismissal. . . .

Allied with dissident publicity is the demand for strict legality. When the Helsinki Watch Groups were initiated in 1975 the dissident leaders acted openly and members signed their reports in order to emphasize the legality and the nonconspiratorial nature of their work. As dissidents consistently reiterate that the laws be taken seriously, this certainly confounds and torments the authorities. While held in jail, for instance, Vladimir Bukovsky asked for a copy of the Soviet Constitution. It took an interrogator four days to find a copy, which then had to be purchased. Bukovsky, how-

(Continued on page 384)

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LETTERS

On "The Legacy of Herbert Marcuse"

Editors:

Jean L. Cohen writes of "The Legacy of Herbert Marcuse" (*Dissent*, Winter 1981), expostulating his "penetrating analyses" and "spirit." In the spirit of *Dissent*, I dissent. Marcuse was a sad figure and his thought deficient for the following reasons:

1. His one-dimensionality is contrary to socioscientific evidence. 2. Proletarian class consciousness is inhibited by shared societal values and not by "mass culture." 3. Since economics did not lend itself to support of his idiosyncratic theories, he employed the sophistry of psychology. 4. Marcuse's idea of happiness is nothing but an embellished version of Karl Marx's postulate for overcoming alienation. 5. The purported repressive state is a figment of his disordered thinking.

Incidentally, in many ways Marcuse was as Victorian as Karl Marx himself.

ELLIOTT A. COHEN
Pomona, N.Y. □

"The Arabs of Israel"

Editors:

Bernard Rosenberg's article, "The Arabs of Israel" (Spring 1980), erroneously states that "In 1922 Britain partitioned Mandatory Palestine. . . ."

In fact, in 1922 Britain suspended the applicability of the Jewish National Home Provisions and the Mandate in "the province of Transjordan" and Transjordan remained subject to the Mandate until 1946 when it gained its independence.

ROGER A. GERBER
New York City □

The Fate of Eugene McCarthy

Editors:

David Bromwich's attack on Eugene McCarthy (*Dissent*, Winter 1981) was uncivilized and uninformed. More interesting was Bromwich's recitation of now familiar McCarthy mythology rooted, I believe, in the continuing bitterness of the left toward the former senator. His sin is that he was never their man, but in the beginning and today remains his own. The left was unhappy with McCarthy from the early days of 1968, and dimly perceived even then that they had made a marriage of convenience with a maverick. The fascinating and sad puzzlement is that instead of accepting McCarthy for what he is, and seeing that it was precisely this independent quality that allowed him to step forth when all the McGoverns and Kennedys would not, the left's resentment has continued to fester. McCarthy "let them down" because he was unwilling and unable to be a populist hero. If McCarthy *had* left politics, or forsaken it after 1968, "liberals" of the Bromwich variety would be contented indeed. The real complaint is that he stayed in politics and continued to steer an independent course.

There are so many factual errors and tired shibboleths in Bromwich's piece that not all can be responded to. The Humphrey endorsement has been explained again and again; this was McCarthy's last bit of leverage for moving Humphrey on the war. McCarthy *was* active in 1972 including campaigning extensively for and with George McGovern, whom he had little in common with *but* the war issue. McCarthy's endorsement of Reagan was not only consistent with his principles but included a restatement of many of them, some libertarian, some constitutionalist, some in fact liberal. (The endorsement may have been a renouncement of Bromwich's principals. They were not of McCarthy's.) That statement did not include a promise to "do anything for Reagan." Nor is it clear why Bromwich weirdly regards any endorsement as somehow a pledge of common identity. Would he hold this for Rev. Abernathy too?

I am amazed when "liberals" say McCarthy's 1976 effort was silly or positively bad, as if this were self-evident, and in the next breath declare their singular dedication to the "poor and helpless." I worked for McCarthy over Carter in 1976 in part because his record concerning the helpless was indisputable. From "security risks" in the '50s, to migrants, to welfare mothers, to (most recently) those abused by the IRS, McCarthy seemed drawn to the helpless. I do not know if this was a liberal disposition or purely humane, but it is unquestionably a fact about Eugene McCarthy. I was at Kent State in the '70s where students felt pretty helpless. McCarthy introduced legislation to limit the power of the National Guard. He wrote for the tenth anniversary commemorative booklet the students put out last year.

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And only McCarthy came to our campus and spoke on May 4. He quoted Camus in that address: "I cannot keep from being drawn toward everyday life, toward those, whoever they may be, who are humiliated or debased."

Finally, the now old saw that McCarthy turned against politics and decided he was too good for it. Again certain facts seem to contradict this: his own campaigns since '68, help he has given to congressional and gubernatorial candidates, his legal and lobbying work against the federal election bureaucracy and the IRS, hundreds of speeches, scores of essays and articles, radio commentaries, etc. This is an awfully public life for someone who disdains it. On a personal level, let me say that I never met the petulent and arrogant enigma I've read so much about. I saw McCarthy a lot in 1976 when he was putting in 12-hour days of three or four speeches each and was transported mostly in VWs driven by students. The man I saw was warm, accessible, patient, and great fun.

KEITH BURRIS
University of Pittsburgh

DAVID BROMWICH REPLIES:

Mr. Burris has confused a person with a cause. He appears to have said to himself, every time McCarthy opened his mouth: "Now, how can I justify that?" I congratulate him on his success. But why should those of us to whom the cause is more important "accept McCarthy for what he is"? I admired him in 1968 because he seemed to me sane about the war, liberal on domestic policy, courageous to have challenged LBJ in the first place, and therefore a worthier candidate than Kennedy. In the '70s I was disappointed by many of his positions and nonpositions, but until he endorsed Reagan I would have imagined him as part of any strong reconstruction of the Democratic party—if only as a once-legendary presence and still-serviceable rhetorician.

Did Mr. Burris think it a rational choice to work for McCarthy in 1976? (There was another race too, between Carter and Ford.) And does he now agree with McCarthy's preference of Reagan over Carter? If so, is he encouraged by the news he hears from Washington these days? Food stamps cut, and the military budget up by one-third: is that a fair restatement of McCarthy's principles, "some libertarian, some constitutionalist, some in fact liberal?"

For more on the enigmatic side of McCarthy's character, Mr. Burris might look at Jeremy Larner's memoir of 1968, *Nobody Knows*. But, good as that book is, it contains nothing quite as revealing as Mr. Burris's vignette from 1980. The image of McCarthy, on campus, quoting Camus, to affirm his solidarity with the "humiliated or debased"—and incidentally to affirm a false equation between the humiliating and the "everyday"—completes the sketch I was trying to compose, and more brilliantly than anything I discovered on my own. By endorsing Reagan he has made it a matter of simple pride for the Democrats not to allow him back. Where that leaves him and his admirers I do not know. Will it be enough for them to heckle genially from the sidelines, wonder at how uncivilized everybody has become, and remember a time when campaigns were full of student-driven VWs? □

Kudo

Editors:

Please enter my subscription to two more years of *Dissent*. Although I often disagree with articles in *Dissent*, they are always intelligent, and often they present a subject in a way that is entirely new to me. In a time when political debate and vision are finding new extremes of meanness, sense, charity, and imagination are welcome.

PAUL N. PARSONS □

BOOKS (continued from page 382)

ever, for this legalistic defiance, received a much longer sentence than he might have received otherwise.

Although Rubenstein is confident that the dissident movement is now a permanent fixture inside the Soviet Union, there are warnings that this may not be so. Sakharov's internal exile to Gorki, which Rubenstein labels an "administrative kidnapping," was consummated without even the pretense of a trial or the process of criminal procedures. Before the 1980 Moscow Summer Olympics the Soviets accelerated a crackdown on dissidents in order to clear the city of what the Kremlin considered "hooligans" and "parasites."

Recently, Amnesty International reported it had yet to hear of a single case in which a Soviet court had acquitted anyone charged with a political or religious offense. These events are a reminder that there is always the strong chance of the Soviet Union shifting in a different direction, inward perhaps, or of a return to outright Stalinist methods. This could put an end to the hope for continued internal change in the Soviet Union and for the eventuality of real peace in the world. □

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